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# MESSIANIC PROPHECY,

AND

# THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

BY

WILLIAM S. KENNEDY.

What think ye of Christ? — *Words of Christ.*
It is the Lord. — *Words of John.*

SECOND EDITION.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS.

## PART FIRST.

*Introduction.*


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Desirableness and Probability of a Divine Incarnation | 7 |
| Pagan idea of a God-man | 11 |
| Hebrew idea | 14 |
| Interpretation of Prophecy | 16 |


### PERIOD I.

*Messianic Predictions of the Pentateuch.*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Genesis | 3 : 15 | 25 |
| " | 12 : 3 | 26 |
| " | 22 : 18 | 26 |
| " | 28 : 14 | 27 |
| " | 49 : 10 | 27 |
| Numbers | 24 : 17 | 29 |
| Deuteronomy | 18 : 15 to 18 | 30 |


### PERIOD II.

*Messianic Psalms.*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2 Samuel | 7 : 16 | 35 |
| Psalm | 16 | 38 |


601468

CONTENTS.


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Psalm | 40 | 40 |
| " | 22 | 41 |
| " | 69 | 45 |
| " | 2 | 47 |
| " | 110 | 49 |
| " | 45 | 51 |
| " | 72 | 53 |
| " | 8 | 54 |


## PERIOD III.

*First of the Prophetic Books.*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Joel | 2 : 28 : 32 | 61 |
| Hosea | 2 : 16 to 25 | 63 |
| " | 3 : 5 | 63 |
| " | 11 : 1 | 63 |
| Amos | 9 : 8 to 15 | 65 |
| Micah | 4 : 1 to 4 | 66 |
| " | 5 : 2 | 68 |
| Isaiah | 2 : 2 to 4 | 71 |
| " | 4 : 2 | 72 |
| " | 7 : 14 | 73 |
| " | 9 : 1 to 7 | 76 |
| " | 11 : 1 to 10 | 79 |
| " | 32 : 1, 2, 15 to 20 | 82 |
| " | 40 : 1 to 5 | 86 |
| " | 42 : 1 to 9 | 87 |
| " | 49 | 89 |
| " | 50 | 91 |
| " | 52 : 13 to 15 | 92 |
| " | 53 | 92 |
| " | 55 : 1 to 5 | 103 |
| " | 59 : 20 | 105 |
| " | 61 : 1 to 4 | 106 |
| " | 63 : 1 to 6 | 107 |

CONTENTS.

## PERIOD IV.

*Chaldean Period.*


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| Zephaniah | 3 : 9 to 20 | 111 |
| Jeremiah | 23 : 1 to 8 | 113 |
| " | 31 : 31 to 40 | 114 |
| " | 33 : 14 to 26 | 116 |
| Ezekiel | 11 : 14 to 21 | 118 |
| " | 17 : 22 to 24 | 119 |
| " | 34 : 23 to 31 | 119 |
| " | 36 : 23 to 32 | 120 |
| " | 37 : 21 to 28 | 121 |
| " | 40 | 122 |
| " | 48 | 122 |
| Daniel | 2 : 31 to 45 | 124 |
| " | 7 : 13, 14 | 126 |
| " | 9 : 24 to 27 | 128 |
| " | 12 | 135 |


---

## PERIOD V.

*Period of the Restoration.*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Haggai | 2 : 6 to 9 | 139 |
| Zechariah | 3 : 8 to 10 | 141 |
| " | 4 | 142 |
| " | 6 : 9 to 15 | 143 |
| " | 8 | 143 |
| " | 9 : 9, 10 | 144 |
| " | 11 : 12, 13 | 146 |
| " | 12 : 6 to 14 | 151 |
| " | 13 | 153 |
| Malachi | 3 : 1 to 3 | 156 |
| " | 4 | 157 |

CONTENTS.

## PART SECOND.

*Introduction.*


PAGE

Probable manner of the Incarnation ..... 163
Anticipated Labors of the Christ ..... 165
Antecedents ..... 169
Probable time of the Advent ..... 174
Presumption that Jesus was God-man ..... 176
Materials for a Life of Christ ..... 178


---

### PERIOD I.

*From the Annunciation to the Baptism of Jesus.*


The Annunciation ..... 184
Joseph and Mary at Bethlehem ..... 185
Birth of Jesus ..... 186
Circumcision and Ransom of Jesus ..... 188
Visit of the Eastern Magi ..... 190
Flight into Egypt, and Slaughter at Bethlehem ..... 193
Return from Egypt; Childhood of Jesus ..... 195
Visits Jerusalem when twelve years of age ..... 197
Youth and Education ..... 199
Joseph and his Family ..... 203


---

### PERIOD II.

*Commencement of Christ's Public Ministry.*


John the Baptist and his Ministry ..... 206
Jesus leaves Nazareth ..... 210
Comes to John for Baptism ..... 212
Testimony of John ..... 214
The Temptation ..... 215

CONTENTS.

## PERIOD V.

*From the Third Passover to the Feast of Tabernacles.*


| | nm PAGE |
|---|---|
| The Syrophenician women | 328 |
| The Deaf Man of Decapolis healed | 329 |
| Feeding of the four thousand | 330 |
| Crossing the Lake; Leaven of the Pharisees | 331 |
| The Blind Man of Bethsaida | 332 |
| Peter's faith; the Keys | 333 |
| Peter rebuked | 334 |
| The Transfiguration | 335 |
| A father with a demoniacal child | 338 |
| Return from Cesarea Phillippi to Galilee | 339 |
| Tribute-money | 340 |
| Ambition of the Disciples reproved | 341 |
| Law for adjusting difficulties among brethren | 343 |
| Forgiveness | 344 |
| The Seventy sent out | 344 |
| Instructions given to Missionaries | 346 |
| Doom of the Lake Cities | 347 |
| Final departure from Galilee | 348 |
| Samaritan Inhospitality; the Ten Lepers | 349 |


---

## PERIOD VI.

*From the Feast of Tabernacles to the Triumphal Entry.*


| | |
|---|---|
| Jesus preaches in the temple | 351 |
| Attempt to arrest Jesus | 353 |
| Rage of the Pharisees | 354 |
| The adultress brought to Christ | 355 |
| Proof of his Divinity | 356 |
| Freedom through Him | 358 |
| Christ before Abraham | 359 |
| The man who fell among thieves | 360 |

CONTENTS.


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Martha and Mary; the better part | 361 |
| On Prayer; the Lord's Prayer | 362 |
| Return of the Seventy | 365 |
| The man born blind: Christ the Light | 367 |
| Christ a door and a Shepherd | 369 |
| Jesus in Solomon's porch | 370 |
| Jesus in Perea; death of Lazarus | 372 |
| Return to Bethany; Lazarus raised | 374 |
| The Sanhedrim determine to kill Christ | 376 |
| Christ at Ephraim; the crooked woman healed | 378 |
| Journey towards Jerusalem | 379 |
| Dines with a Pharisee; cures an invalid; humility; guests | 380 |
| The cross to be borne | 382 |
| Parables,—the Lost Sheep; the Lost Silverling; the Prodigal | 383 |
| The unjust Steward | 383 |
| The Rich Man and Lazarus | 384 |
| Prayer,—the Pharisee and the Publican; the unjust Judge | 385 |
| Marriage; Divorce; Celibacy | 386 |
| Christ blesses little children | 387 |
| What shall I do? | 388 |
| The Laborers in the Vineyard | 390 |
| Salome's request for her sons | 391 |
| Blind Bartimeus | 392 |
| Zaccheus | 393 |
| Parable of the Pounds | 394 |
| Jesus goes from Jericho to Bethany | 395 |


---

## PERIOD VII.

*From the Triumphal Entry to the Crucifixion.*


| | |
|---|---|
| Triumphal entry into Jerusalem | 398 |
| The barren fig-tree | 401 |
| The fig-tree withered | 403 |
| Deputation of Pharisees | 404 |
| The disobedient son; the wicked husbandmen | 405 |

PAGE
Christ's first Disciples ..... 222
Return to Galilee ..... 224
The Marriage at Cana ..... 226
Christ's first Miracle ..... 227

---

## PERIOD III.

*From the First to the Second Passover.*

Jesus purifies the Temple ..... 232
Nicodemus ..... 233
First Labors in Judea ..... 236
Journey through Samaria; Sychar ..... 238
Return to Galilee; Itinerant Labors ..... 242
The Nobleman's Son healed ..... 243
Visits Nazareth ..... 244
Miraculous Draught of Fishes ..... 246
The Demoniac in the Synagogue ..... 248
Peter's Mother-in-law, and others, healed ..... 249
Jesus leaves Capernaum ..... 251
Followed by Multitudes; Cures a Leper ..... 252
Heals the Man let down through the roof ..... 254
Matthew called ..... 255

---

## PERIOD IV.

*From the Second Passover to the Third.*

The Invalid at Bethesda; the Sabbath ..... 257
Plucking the Wheat-ears on the Sabbath ..... 260
The Withered Hand restored ..... 261
Preaching by the Sea-side ..... 262
Choosing of the Twelve ..... 264
Sermon on the Mount ..... 267
The Centurion's Servant healed ..... 271
The Widow's Son restored to life ..... 272

CONTENTS.


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Message of John the Baptist from prison | 273 |
| Christ's estimate of John | 275 |
| Jesus dines with a Pharisee | 278 |
| A Penitent Woman anoints his feet | 279 |
| Christ's followers contribute "of their substance" | 280 |
| The Dumb and Blind Demoniac healed | 281 |
| Beelzebub; Blasphemy of the Pharisees | 282 |
| A Sign demanded | 283 |
| Effort of his Brethren to confine Jesus | 285 |
| Hypocritical Pharisees denounced | 286 |
| Disciples warned against the Pharisees | 289 |
| Parable of the Rich Man | 292 |
| Use of Parables | 293 |
| The Sower and the Seed | 295 |
| Wheat and Tares; Net and Fishes | 297 |
| The Mustard Seed; the Leaven; the Treasure and the Pearl | 298 |
| Jesus poorer than the Birds and Foxes | 299 |
| Looking back | 300 |
| Crossing the Lake; the Storm | 301 |
| The Gadarene Demoniac | 302 |
| Levi's Feast; Fasting; the New Patch, &c | 305 |
| The woman healed of her issue; Jairus' daughter raised | 307 |
| Two Blind Men cured | 309 |
| Second (?) visit to Nazareth | 310 |
| The Twelve sent out to preach | 311 |
| John the Baptist beheaded | 313 |
| Herod fears Jesus | 314 |
| Return of the Twelve | 315 |
| Seeking rest; feeding the five thousand, &c | 316 |
| The storm; walking the water, &c | 320 |
| Christ sifts his followers | 321 |
| Of defilements, traditions, &c | 325 |

# PREFACE.

THE design of this work is to present, in popular form, the Messianic Prophecies of the Old Testament in their chronological order, and the Life of Jesus Christ, arranged according to the best harmony of the Gospels.

Every man's religion is determined by his view of Christ. And his view of Christ must be determined mainly by the study of the Gospel narrative, in connection with those prophecies which constitute the true introduction to the New Testament. To facilitate this study of the historical origin of Christianity, and if possible to bring the living Christ, and the aim of his incarnation, more vividly before his readers, is the earnest hope of the author.

Large acknowledgments are due to the Christology of Hengstenberg and Neander's Life of Christ. Dr. Robinson's Harmony has also been an important assistant in the preparation of this work.

The large and learned works above named, not being available for most readers, it is believed that a work on the plan here adopted is a desideratum in our literature. If this little book may supply the deficit until a better appears, the aim of the writer will be accomplished.

CONTENTS.


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| Marriage of the king's son | 406 |
| Tribute to Cæsar | 407 |
| The Resurrection; Sadducees | 409 |
| The Greatest Commandment; What think ye of Christ? | 410 |
| Hypocrisy of the Pharisees denounced | 411 |
| The Widow's Mite; Magnificence of the Temple | 413 |
| Believing Rulers; enquiring Gentiles | 414 |
| The Voice from Heaven | 416 |
| The Second Advent; Signs | 417 |
| Destruction of Jerusalem foretold | 418 |
| Suddenness of Christ's Second Coming; Warnings | 420 |
| The Last Judgment | 422 |
| Judas and the Sanhedrim, Simon's Supper | 424 |
| The Paschal Supper | 425 |
| Washing the Disciple's feet | 428 |
| The Traitor discovered | 429 |
| Peter's confidence rebuked | 431 |
| The Lord's Supper instituted | 432 |
| Discourse after Supper | 433 |
| Christ a Vine | 434 |
| The Comforter promised | 435 |
| Concluding Prayer | 437 |
| Gethsemane | 438 |
| Judas and his confederates | 440 |
| The Arrest | 441 |
| Preliminary Examination | 443 |
| The Sanhedrim convened | 445 |
| The Trial and Condemnation; Jesus before Pilate | 446 |
| Jesus sent to Herod | 449 |
| Pilate's Superstition and Reluctance | 450 |
| Jesus Scourged and Crowned | 451 |
| Remorse and death of Judas | 452 |
| Bearing the Cross to Calvary | 454 |
| Crucifixion | 455 |
| Burial | 459 |

CONTENTS.

## PERIOD VIII.

*From the Resurrection to the Ascension.*


| | PAGE |
|---|---|
| The Resurrection | 461 |
| The Angels and the Earthquake | 464 |
| The Women at the Tomb | 465 |
| Peter and John at the Sepulchre | 466 |
| Mary; the Angels; Jesus | 467 |
| The Sanhedrim; Peter; Christ at Emmaus | 469 |
| Christ appears to the ten Disciples | 471 |
| Thomas | 472 |
| Christ in Galilee; the Draught of Fishes | 473 |
| Meets the five hundred believers in Galilee | 475 |
| Last interview with the Disciples; Ascension | 476 |

# FIRST PART.

# MESSIANIC PROPHECY.

# INTRODUCTION.

THE highest and the lowest of our race are alike interested in supernatural truth. The ignorant eagerly devour the marvellous legends of superstition. The learned by their researches into Nature ever seek for the hidden and supernatural. Nature's highest charm is her "foot-prints of the Creator." World and stars were a mockery if they revealed no God. Knowledge of God is the highest and most desirable attainment.

Complete knowledge of God we can never attain. For ever revealing yet for ever concealing himself, God will be our endless study. Man may comprehend the world, being himself a microcosm, but he can never comprehend Deity. His knowledge of God must ever be anthropomorphous. We can only know what of Him is analogous to something in ourselves. The idea of God which men cherish corresponds to their own characters. The pagan's God is but a greater pagan. And were an ideal of God to be communicated from above, it must come in human

language, and be subject to human limitations. Hence the highest possible revelation of God to man would be that of a divine man, God-man, God incarnated and working under human conditions. This would be the highest and the most impressive manifestation of Deity. A life is always more effective than a discourse. The "Word" is to us most potent when it becomes "flesh."

Next to an incarnate manifestation of God, the highest attainment would be the portrait or ideal of such a life. To give such a portrait, so far as may be possible, is the aim of Messianic Prophecy. To realize that ideal in an actual life is the mission of Christ.

All mankind have therefore a deep interest in this revelation, regarding it only in its intellectual aspect. But the moral interest is far greater than the intellectual. Instruction is needed, but regeneration is more needful for us. The conviction is nigh universal that only a divine mediator can atone for human guilt and restore man to favor and communion with God. Human nature groans under a sinking load, and cries for deliverance. The race has longed and searched for Emmanuel, and failing on account of its blindness, has often attempted to make him. What else can be said of Jupiter, Prometheus, Vishnu, or Odin, than that they are the abortive efforts of the human soul to produce by apotheosis a God-man? These monstrous man-Gods show the

universal consciousness of such a want. They show also the universal conviction that somewhere and at some time God would thus reveal himself.

Is then the incarnation of Deity *possible?* All things not contradictory to the divine nature are possible. God manifests himself in nature. The sceptic himself finds God in trees and flowers, brooks and pebbles. He finds him also in his own breast. He hears God rehearsing his holy laws to his awakened conscience. And if God thus pours himself through all his works, why may he not peculiarly appropriate to himself one human form and make it the organ of his communion with the race? It is not impossible that God may assume every form in which rational creatures exist in order to reveal himself more perfectly to them.

The possibility of an incarnation being admitted, what is the *probability?* Would God make the most perfect possible revelation of himself to man? Not, surely, for any trivial reason. God would not institute a vain masquerade. He would not become flesh for any merely æsthetic or intellectual purpose; nor for any social or civil object. Yet God certainly desires to be known by his creatures. He would have them filled with the knowledge of himself. They glorify him and fulfil the ends of creation only in proportion as they know God. And if this manifestation be needful to fit them for the great ends of

existence, it is probable that God would become incarnated. For a sufficient moral reason he would thus appear.

If the race have deformed his image and lost the knowledge of God, and an incarnation is needed for their salvation, the probability would in that case depend upon God's estimation of mankind. If he regarded their salvation as important, we might hope that he would appear to save. The universal human consciousness, and all history, testify that man needs such a salvation. Inspiration alone can tell whether God will thus save. If God be a God of mercy we may at least cling to any intimations of a divine manifestation in our behalf. To try to disbelieve such intimation, to seek to tear away the last plank of hope from a sinking world, is madness and malignity. Unbelief can give no substitute for Christ. The world's destiny hangs upon Emmanuel. If there is no revelation of a God-man the race is hopeless. On the side of scepticism broods ancient Night with her spectres. On the side of faith streams up the aurora of hope. If there is no Messianic Prophecy and no Christ, paganism may as well crowd again its pantheons. Beaten by everlasting storms, our race must sink eternally in the deep of ruin, without a Christ.

Who can turn to the night-hag of unbelief and despair, and rest in the conviction that our Father has cast us off? Let us not go to this study with a heartless criticism, but lovingly embrace and cherish whatever of promise we may find.

*When* or *where* the divine idea of Messiah would be introduced, or the divine man make his appearance, only God could reveal. But intimations of some kind, at some time and place, that such an event as the incarnation would take place, we should certainly expect. The shadow would reach us before the substance. An ideal by which the Divine One might be recognised at his advent would doubtless break in prophetic radiance from some cloud. And when the Holy One appears he will give indications of his origin, and leave foot-prints by which after-ages could trace his course.

Man could not predetermine the *kind of life* Emmanuel would lead. His psychology, his practical philosophy, and his course of action might be unfathomable by human measures. Some characteristics, however, might be certainly anticipated. We should expect his humanity to be of the highest type. We should also look for unmistakable exhibitions of divine power, wisdom and goodness. But how those attributes would be exhibited, in what peculiar ways the concrete life would express and occupy itself, we could only learn from inspiration, or from the actual manifestation. We may not dictate the mode of the advent or of Messiah's life and labors. Let us take the revelation gratefully as it comes. Enough for us if we get a divine revelation and a Redeemer in any form.

Some idea of an incarnation, as remarked above, has appeared wherever there has been human culture.

We should have no hope now of finding Emmanuel or his prophetic portrait on pagan soil. The harvest of heathenism was long since reaped. Since the days of "one Saul of Tarsus," paganism has been decadent. But it is interesting to know that paganism, in its various forms, was blindly feeling after a God-man.

*Greece built up a gorgeous mytholog.* Her Prometheus has been likened to the idea of Christ. He was, in a sense, represented as mediator between man and the Thunderer. But he stood in sharp antagonism with Jove, and but partially in sympathy with man. He was neither God nor man; much less both. He brought fire or light into the world; but it was the fire that burns in the bones, the herald of care and misery; not that "true light" that came by the Word.

Prometheus was the "inventive genius" of man, not the wisdom of God. Far from delivering a condemned race, he could not deliver himself from the wrath of Jove. He suffered by compulsion as a stoic. "Father, thy will be done," never broke in submission from his lips. He made no atonement.

The *Indian theosophy*, probably retaining a trace of patriarchal prophecy, came nearer to the idea of a Christ. Vishnu enters historically into the human race to give mankind the model of a better life. But he does not present the divine and human natures in

harmonious union. The two ever struggle in discordant antagonism, till one absorbs the other. According as the divine or the human elements preponderate, this religion vacillates between ideal pantheism and gross materialism. Buddhism, its present predominant form, is a base materialism, according to which the Grand Lama is virtual God, and the Chinese empire the kingdom of heaven.

*Persian theosophy*, growing out of a stock kindred to the Hebrew, made a still nearer approximation to the prophetic idea of Messiah. Ormuzd appears at times as an almighty creator, sustaining a mysterious relation to the eternal God. Generally, however, he is represented as a creature, Jehovah's prince of angels, yet equal in majesty to God. In some sense he acts the part of mediator. Between him and the infernal Ahriman goes on a great contest, the present course of the world exhibiting their alternate successes and discomfitures. It was predicted that in the last times Ormuzd would triumph and adorn the world with righteousness; that the earth and elements would then be tempered as a paradise; the influence of evil dews or demons would then be restrained; and the human race, speaking one language, would, on terms of social and political equality, peacefully pursue one common mode of life. The resurrection of the dead and the last judgment were also foretold.

No one can doubt, however, that unmistakable scraps of tradition, derived from Hebrew prophecy, glitter among the dreams and fictions of Persian theosophy.

These efforts of paganism show the longing of the human soul to get back into fellowship with its God; and the universal belief in a divine incarnation. By contrast, they show the superiority and inspiration of Hebrew prophecy. At best they are empty and imperfect ideals. They satisfy neither the intellectual nor the moral demand. They do not present the model-man, nor the righteous God of love. They do not point us to the "Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

Greece, Persia, and India afford no consistent ideal of Emmanuel, and no incarnate life of God. It were idle to search through ruder paganisms.

We turn to the *Hebrew book* to search for a revelation of the God-man. Many object to the Hebrews as a dull, heavy people, unfit to be the medium of such revelations. But we are not concerned with the people as a mass, any more than we were with Greek or Indian masses. We seek for the highest achievements of the first minds; and not so much for that which human culture produced as for the gift of divine condescension. And why would not God rather pour his golden treasure into the ruder vessel, in order that the glory might be seen to be of him? The

people that have no Pantheon will be fitter recipients of revelation. Art and arms would furnish no attraction for Messiah. He would not seek the false splendor and baby-pageantry of earthly courts. The people who possess the best morality and religion should command our first attention in searching for divine revelations. And doubtless the moral sentiment of antiquity culminated in Palestine. Here the soul of humanity blossomed out, as did the intellect in Greece. Palestine, otherwise barren, was on that account more fruitful in spiritual productions. Trees of heaven grow best where there are fewest of earth's. The boasted human culture and vaunted mysteries of Greece and India were against them, so far as the reception of divine communications was concerned. No one can now say much in behalf of their morality or religion.

But in these particulars the Hebrews were generally far in advance of the age; and through all their history, like a golden warp, runs the idea of Messiah. Indeed this history can only be studied aright when it is regarded as a development specially conducted by Providence for the introduction of Emmanuel.

Not that the mass of the people distinctly conceived and embraced the doctrine of the God-man. No nation truly understands its own relations to the plans of God, and the general history of the world. If the ideal of Christ is to come through the He-

brews we should expect them to be in part the unconscious instruments in the divine hand. What knows the vessel of its passengers? or the telegraphic wire of the message that shoots along it?

The Hebrews would probably catch something of the divine idea as it worked through them. Some few might attain to bright visions of the coming glory; but the full, broad conception of a God incarnate they could not generally reach. Nations and ages and eternity alone could compute the treasure poured into that earthen vessel.

The *historical verity* of the Hebrew books must be here assumed. Their claim to inspiration has been substantiated to the satisfaction of most of those who have faithfully studied them. No other satisfactory account has ever been given of them. This at least may be said, that if they are not reliable history there is no reliable ancient history now extant. And historical credibility is all that need be asked for the present. If we find a consistent Christ delineated in them, they will need no other proof of inspiration.

The *interpretation* of *prophecy* is difficult, particularly when it treats of a character and a transaction so original and *sui generis* as Christ and the incarnation. The labor is increased by the manner in which Messianic Prophecy is blended with other

matter. Pure gold is not found in large masses. The value of the mass lies mostly in the small particles of the true metal scattered through it. Messianic Prophecy was the highest achievement of the Hebrews. Their entire history was a preparative for Messiah's advent. His appearance was the culmination of the Theocracy. But the processes of growth are obscure. It is easy to analyze a flower; not easy to follow the life-principle that works darkly in root and stem and leaf, until at last it sends out the flower. We may call the Hebrew nation a millennial plant, that was watered, sunned and guarded through centuries, till at last it shot up a lordly stem, budded and blossomed in glory. Christ incarnate was the blossom; Christ in history is the fruit. Having answered its end the old plant died. Its embalmed relics we call prophecy, and in them we trace the channel through which that mysterious life worked its way into human history. The summer-growths of the idea of Christ are plainly marked. The winter periods in which it rested and recruited have left but faint mementoes. Changing the figure again, we may say that Hebrew Scripture is a geological formation containing organic remains of Messianic Prophecy, which the paleontologist must laboriously search out, analyze, and "set up." Now and then he finds a joint missing or mutilated. But the general outline of the original is preserved.

It has been objected to Messianic Prophecy that *unity* and *harmony are wanting;* that such diverse names, deeds and characters are assigned to the supposed Christ. The objectors forget that each prediction is a fragment of the whole, adaptated to a particular place in the complex structure. At one time a hint was given to encourage or alarm the nation at a peculiar crisis, and the representation was modified to suit the case in hand; at other times, characteristics were delineated by which Emmanuel might be identified at his appearance. Of course there would be diversity, according to the immediate purpose to be subserved, or the idiosyncrasy of the prophet. He who should collect and unitize in himself these diverse and fragmentary predictions would thereby be the more certainly proved Messiah. One biographer may dwell upon the physical constitution and feats of a hero, another may write his intellectual history, and a third his spiritual. Each work may be unlike each other and yet all be important parts of the complete biography. So may one prophet speak of Christ's humanity, another of his divinity, a third of his humiliation and sufferings, and a fourth of his exaltation and glory. Each attained but a partial view of that magnificent character respecting whom he wrote; still there is unity and agreement in the different representations. In some instances the similarity is so striking that other objectors deny the originality of some of the predictions declaring

that one prophet merely *purloined* the *writings of another*.

This objection overlooks the fact that the same vision may have been given for similar ends to different seers. It may have been desired to secure "two or three witnesses" who should agree in minute particulars as well as general principles; and if the thought were the same in two cases, why should not the second prophet record it in the words of the first? Small minds are jealous of plagiarisms, great minds appropriate everything. The prophets were not ambitious to display originality.

Much is said about the *phraseology* of prophecy. Human language is at best a slender medium for supernatural truth. The idea and work of a God-man were so unlike all else that Messianic Prophecy must be straitened for language; there were no *genera* under which to classify them; they could only be represented by pictures: and to be intelligible to Hebrews the figures must be drawn from Hebrew history. The prophets must seize upon such things, events, and characters, as came nearest to a resemblance to that character and work of which they wrote. If Messiah were to come as a teacher of new truth, they would name him prophet; if to atone for sin, he would be called priest or sacrifice; or if he were conceived of as directing and controlling mankind, he would be to them King or Lord. Hence, in the interpretation of prophecy, we should be guided

by the principles which we adopt in the interpretation of other figurative discourse. Neither a strictly literal nor a mystical interpretation is admissible: the student should try to place himself in the position of the writer, become imbued with his spirit, comprehend his aim, and become familiar with his mental and rhetorical habits and the sources of his imagery, and then apply in a common sense manner the principles of general interpretation. Do this, and much of the obscurity of prophecy will vanish.

The prophets did not always understand the import of their own words; it was not necessary that they should; they had not the full canon by which to be guided in the interpretation of parts,—we have. Some predictions had an inferior reference to the times and circumstances of the prophet, and a higher reference to Christ. The Hebrews would in such cases naturally catch the lower and fail of the higher allusion; the Hebrews were the best interpreters of the mere *words* of their language, but not always of entire predictions. Some predictions could only be interpreted by the fulfilment; the *time* of the fulfilment was generally left obscure. In the vision, fore-ground and back-ground came near together; at one time a distant event is seen so vividly that it seems present, or the seer stands midway in the scene and looks both backward and forward; at another time, the seer leaps a gulf of ages and looks back upon intermediate scenes. Perhaps he even passes the

bounds of time, and from the dim shore beyond reads us the sum of our world's history: thus scenes separated by centuries are grouped together and make but one picture; thus the beginning and the end of Christ's mediatorial work are sometimes spoken of as if there were no long ages between them. The prophets sketched here and there a shining point, leaving the intervals for the development of time. With God "a thousand years are as one day;" and it was enough for the Church to know that great mercies were in store for her which would be revealed in God's good time. In a few instances, however, the time of important events was definitely predicted.

The *dramatic* and *symbolical style* of many parts of prophecy is worthy of note. Often the prophet leaps upon the stage and speaks now in his own character, then as a by-stander, and again as the voice of the person seen in vision; thus it comes that even God becomes at times a speaker in the sublime colloquy.

Some of the *symbolical transactions* were merely ideal, developed only in the prophet's mind; others were formally enacted before the people in order to deepen the impression of the message.

Prophecy was never designed to be history; faith could not be sight. Revelation was made plain enough for the studious and susceptible, not for the indolent and stupid: it was not expedient in any

case that men should know "the times and seasons which the Father" concealed.

Some general principles may now be specified which should guide us in referring specific passages to Messiah. We may err in regarding either too much or too little as Messianic; an error on either side is unfortunate; the cause demands the whole truth, and no more. We cannot get too much real prophecy; but scepticism is promoted by claiming to have what we have not.

In searching for Messianic predictions we may be guided in part by *Jewish tradition.* The Jews were the best interpreters of the Hebrew language in its philological aspect; and before the advent of Christ they studied deeply upon Messianic Prophecy; and their extreme reverence for tradition and tenacity of old interpretations have brought down the views of their best commentators. It is therefore important to notice an interpretation uniformly given by them, or renounced only when it crossed later prejudices. Their referring a passage to Messiah is peculiarly significant when it crosses national prejudices; as when they refer a passage to Messiah which represents him as an humble sufferer, this being opposed to the common Jewish view of Messiah as an invincible and exalted prince; and there are many such instances where a Jew would be pressed by all his prejudices to give a different interpretation.

The *Samaritans* furnished an unsuspicious testimony to the Messianic import of certain passages in the Pentateuch. They rejected all Jewish tradition, and all the Bible excepting the Pentateuch, and yet had some correct views of a coming Messiah, and implicit confidence in his advent.

Again, we may regard those *passages as Messianic which become significant when thus interpreted, but are evidently inapplicable to any other person;* such are passages descriptive of the divine element in Christ's character, and of his atonement.

*Parallel passages* often point out the allusion of an obscure passage. Sometimes one prophet throws light upon the meaning of another, or one allusion in some part of an extended prediction may settle the reference of the whole; so may one common trait determine the Messianic character of several otherwise diverse descriptions.

*Christ and the apostles* are the most reliable interpreters of prophecy. They sometimes quoted passages from the Old Testament, as in some sense applicable to Christ, without declaring them to be strictly predictions of him; such quotations should not be pressed beyond their merits. But when Christ quotes a passage as a Messianic prediction, it must be so received, or he must be discarded as an interpreter of the Old Testament: and Christ became responsible for the doctrines of the apostles; if we impeach their testimony, we impeach Christ; and if

Christ be not a safe interpreter of prophecy, then there is no safe interpreter; nor is there in that case any revelation, any reliable ancient history, or any thing safe and sure in this world.

Whoever has any correct apprehension of the character of Christ, even if he denies his divinity, will hesitate to attribute to him a false interpretation of scripture. If Christ were not the very incarnation of truth, he must have been the incarnation of falsehood. If he was, as he says, "the truth," then "Moses and the prophets" wrote concerning him, and he was one with the Father.

Let no one accuse him of accommodating his doctrines to the prejudices of his age. The unaspiring and rigid Galilean could never have countenanced the Jesuitic maxim, that a righteous end may sanctify unrighteous means.

Finally, *fulfilment* is an infallible interpreter of prophecy. The New Testament is the best commentary upon the Old, as the Old is the best introduction to the New. Finding many predictions,—not of a general and indefinite nature, but such as no human foresight or inference from existing causes could produce,—accurately fulfilled by Christ, many centuries after their delivery, and admitting no other fulfilment, we cannot deny that they were Messianic Prophecies. The life of Christ is the confirmation of their claim.

# PERIOD I.

## MESSIANIC PREDICTIONS IN THE PENTATEUCH.

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How many predictions of Messiah may have been given before the days of Moses we do not know. Moses recorded enough to enable us to trace the line back to the beginning of human history; the world has now no need of all the intimations that may have been given to our race when in infancy; enough that we find in the first chapter of the world's history a germ of promise which time may develope.

[Gen. 3: 15.]

Here was given, to the guilty and condemned mother of our race, a promise that in future time her offspring should triumph over her spiritual enemy. It was not said whether the victory should be won by a single person, or by many; nor when or in what way the Serpent's head should be bruised. The promise was indefinite, a mere germ; but it was a divine promise, a golden anchor for the drifting race; and in all ages they have clung to it as the pledge of a Savior. Perhaps it was enough for the early world;

or other predictions may have attended and followed it, which the deluge of Noah, or the deluge of time, has swept away. With the commentary of Paul, it becomes to us peculiarly significant. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet."

[Gen. 9: 26, 27.]

Passing to the second beginning of history, we find another intimation, quite as obscure as the above, but valuable, as it puts us upon the right line of search for future revelations. The Lord God will be peculiarly the God of Shem; therefore the true religion will be preserved by him. Revelations, and ultimately the Messiah, may be looked for in his line. History teaches us the fulfilment of these implied promises.

[Gen. 12: 3. Gen. 22: 18.]

Following the genealogical line of Shem, we find it soon producing another representative man, who stands up as a mile-stone in history. The venerable Abraham bears on his front a new promise and prophecy for the race: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." God made a remarkable covenant with this patriarch, and twice assured him that, through his offspring, the world should receive distinguished blessings. How definitely he may have been informed respecting the manner in which the blessing was to come, we are not told; but that he

had some distinct view of the import of the promise seems evident, from the remark of him who was the blessing: "Abram rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad."

The importance of the blessing was indicated by its universality. Abraham stood connected with no group of tribes or single division of the race which might be called "all the nations." Any other than a universal application of the promise is unnatural, puerile, and contrary to all authority, either Hebrew or Christian. The solemnly given promise has no significance, except in the diffusion of Christianity: regarding Christianity as a universal religion, growing out of the Abrahamic covenant, the promise has the deepest significance; henceforth the true religion, prophecy, and eventually Emmanuel, may be looked for in the Hebrew line.

[Gen. 28: 14.]

To the grand-son of Abraham, when a youthful exile, lying by night in the open fields, the same promise was renewed. Abraham's God is with Jacob; he, too, is a marked man; in his seed shall the nations be blessed.

[Gen. 49: 10.]

Guarded by his father's God, through an eventful life, Jacob at length gathered around him a numerous family, and gave them his dying benediction. Ac-

cording to the custom of the ancients, his blessing was wrought into poetical form, that it might be the better remembered and preserved as the heir-loom of the family. With more than poetic inspiration the dying patriarch sung his farewell. History shows us that his song was a prophecy, delineating the fortune of his sons. These sons were to be the representatives of so many distinct, yet fraternal, confederate tribes. The patriarch saw, with far-searching vision, the leading fact in each tribe's history. Judah, he says, will be a crouching lion, holding law and sceptre between his feet; and he will maintain his authority until Shiloh, the peace-maker, come; and around him shall the people rally. Shiloh has been variously construed as rest, peace, or a village of that name; but various difficulties attend all such interpretations, and by them the passage looses its significance. All traditional interpretation, Jewish, Samaritan, and Christian, refers the term to Messiah, "that Lion of the tribe of Judah," whose advent led the angels to sing "Peace on earth." Thus interpreted, the passage becomes highly significant in the light of history; it not only intimates that the promised seed must spring from the tribe of Judah, but that the blessing is to be revealed in a single individual; that around him the people shall gather. He is therefore to be, in some sense, a leader or king,—but a peaceful king, giving the people rest. In this character we shall

find Messiah often represented, his kingdom being depicted as the perfection of the theocracy.

History informs us that Judah maintained his supremacy through the whole history of the theocracy, and secured the capital of State in his territory. From him sprang the royal line, which retained at least limited authority, until from the same line sprang Christ, who peaceably founded a spiritual kingdom, into which all nations are gathering.

[Numb. 24: 17.]

From the nature of the remaining books of Moses we should expect few Messianic predictions in them; only two will be specified. But the theocracy and the ritual established by Moses were more than prophecies; they were the highest types and preparatives for the advent of Christ.

Of questionable, though probable, Messianic import is this prediction of Baalam, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

That a star was used as an emblem of the Messiah seems probable, both from the primitive impostor who, claiming to be the Messiah, named himself "Son of a star," also from the visit of the eastern Magians to Bethlehem, following the star, at Christ's birth; and from Rev. 22: 16, where Christ is called the "bright and morning star."

Baalam, the author of this prophecy, was from the east, probably from the same region as the Magi, who visited our Lord. He saw the star, "but not nigh."

David may indeed be referred to, and probably is mediately, as a type of the Messiah, and as partially fulfilling the prediction. But if Sheth or Seth, as seems probable, refers to Seth the son of Adam, then the passage asserts the universal sway of that sceptre over the human race, an assertion which could not be fulfilled by David. Moab was used as a type of Israel's enemies generally; and the smiting of the corners of Moab by David may be an emblem of the subjection of the Gentiles to the Messiah. Doubtless there are other predictions having in this way an inferior allusion to David, and a higher one to Christ.

[Deut. 18: 15—18.]

In his Deuteronomy, or second giving of the law, Moses sought to prepare the people to go alone, as he was soon to be taken away. Amongst other admonitions he warned them against resorting to necromancy or divination; and, for their comfort, assured them that they should not be left without further revelations by a true prophet. God would raise up one like himself, who should, under divine guidance, reveal what might be needful for them.

The Israelites could at that time conceive of no prophet greater than Moses. When it was said that

one should be raised up like him, it was also implied that he should be both leader and teacher. As Moses stood between the people and God on Sinai, when this promise was first given, the thought would be implied that the coming prophet should also be in some sense a stand-between, or mediator between, God and the people.

Tradition and history prove that both Samaritans and Jews, as also Christ and the New Testament writers, regarded this as one of the clearest and most indisputable Messianic Prophecies.

Peter's and Stephen's use of this passage in Acts 3 : 22, and 7 : 37, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, shows that those to whom they spoke regarded it as certainly Messianic.

Christ declared that Moses wrote concerning him, and explained to certain of his disciples the Messianic passages of the Pentateuch. And what passage if not such an one as this?

There may be an inclusive reference to all the prophets between Moses and Christ, as Christ is said to have spoken through them; 1 Pet. 1 : 11. But to limit the reference to them alone, as a prophetic order, is ungrammatical, unnatural, and never was or could be so understood by the people, until modern ingenuity invented the hypothesis, in order to avoid finding here a prediction of Christ. None of the other prophets bore any striking resemblance to Moses; nor did the order as a whole stand in a similar

relationship to the people. The striking analogies between Christ and Moses are plain to every one. Regarding their personal history the coincidences are wonderful. Each of them was born under the reign of a tyrant, who sought his life, which was in each case wonderfully preserved; each renounced the riches and authority of the world, preferring poverty and suffering with the people of God, to a temporal crown; each was opposed by the people whose good he sought, yet in the end effected their deliverance; each was distinguished for meekness and humility; each stood at the head of his age, and introduced a dispensation of law and religion; each in a sense exercised the same functions of Prophet and King, if not of Priest. Many of their miracles and works were similar; and, above all other similitudes, each acted the part of mediator between God and man. In this most important particular, Christ only resembled Moses, or rather Moses resembled none but Christ.

This brings us through the Pentateuch. We see the prophetic intimations of a God-man brightening. From the promise of triumph for the woman's seed, we have gone along, step by step, till we have found the nation and tribe from which the victor shall spring; we have also received intimations of the offices he shall exercise. He is to be a peaceful King; he is also to be a Prophet-leader, and, in some sense, a Mediator between God and man. All these predic-

tions history teaches us were wonderfully realized in a historical character who appeared upon the stage of human action more than fourteen hundred years after Moses' death. Who can describe as well and confidently the highest leader and teacher of our race who shall appear fourteen hundred years from this date?

With the exit of Moses, Revelation paused. To the fruitful summer of his age succeeded a long winter. For the next centuries, Israel may ruminate upon what Moses left: busied in their new settlement, with the Pentateuch to study, the moral law as the basis of their government, and the ceremonial law to guide their religious life, the people will, for some generations to come, stand in no special need of further revelations.

When spring returns, and an era of new developments dawns upon the nation, we shall see these shoots of Messianic promise budding and sending forth new branches and foliage.

# PERIOD II.

## MESSIANIC PSALMS.

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THE age of David was one of revolution and creation. Under him the theocracy was firmly consolidated, and the throne of Israel established; he also marked a new epoch in sacred literature. With him began the period of lyrical poetry, which produced the central arch of the ancient scriptures.

As the heralds of new eras and leaders of great events are the men through whom promises of the Divine One come, we naturally look to David for a new revelation.

And we find that he became at once the prophet, type, and progenitor of the man of promise. His toils and struggles for the crown, and afterward in subduing the enemies of Israel,—his final triumph and successful reign,—and the firm basis on which he planted his throne,—afforded a rich fund of imagery from which to elaborate new pictures of Messiah.

That David exercised the prophetic gift and wrote of Christ can not be questioned by any one who re-

ceives Christ and Peter as safe interpreters of scripture. The former, speaking of his relationship to David, asks the Jews how, "David could in *spirit* [i. e., by *inspiration*] call him Lord, if he was his Son?" Peter says of him, "Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn that he would raise up Christ to sit upon his throne," &c. And certainly the life of Christ affords many confirmations of David's prophetic gift, by fulfilling many striking passages of his composition. The sweet Psalmist of Israel himself said, "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was upon my tongue."

It need not be shown in what respects David was a type of Christ; the later prophets will tell us of the "Branch of David," whose triumph and reign will show the likeness. The first intimation that David was to be the actual progenitor of Christ was given by Nathan.

[2 Sam. 7: 16.]

This passage is at once a new manifestation of the Messianic idea, and a fit introduction to the Davidic scriptures. As an encouragement to David for his pious determination to build a house for the Most High, a special message is sent by his faithful monitor, Nathan. Speaking of the establishment of the throne in David's family, the prophet suddenly runs forward through the unborn ages, and makes the un

limited promise that his house, kingdom, and throne, "shall be established forever." The emotion of David, upon receiving this announcement, and the allusions made to it in other scriptures, show that "forever" was understood literally. And we may regard it as the first definite prediction of the eternity of Messiah's kingdom,—as a prolongation of the kingdom of David.

David is of the tribe of Judah, from which Shiloh is to come; the throne of David is to be imperishable: then the Anointed must spring from David's line. We have therefore a new name added to the growing genealogy of the Prince of Peace; another golden link is found in the chain that guides to the Redeemer.

We come now upon a style of composition altogether different from the plain, concise, straightforward writings of Moses. The passages which are believed to be Messianic bear the general characteristics of sacred song; the imagery is mainly taken from the experience of David in his various vicissitudes of adversity and prosperity. Hence many passages may be applied to David as well as to his great Successor. In some places it is difficult to determine whether the picture was designed to describe the type or the antetype. Often the bard begins apparently to sing his own joys or sorrows, and, ere he is aware, the divine impulse bears him away and aloft to sing of the Man of Sorrows or the King of Glory. In such cases,

the Messiah is described in terms which only more than describe the Prophet.

The exegetical processes by which the Messianic claim of specific passages is determined cannot be here presented. Results alone can be admitted into this brief survey; those who would test the processes must refer to more extended works.

Gathering together these flowers of prophetic song, we find two distinct colors, the red and the white roses of prophecy. In accordance with the character of that Prince to whom they belong, the red and the white are blended; but it may be more satisfactory to separate them in our analysis.

We find a number of psalms which represent the subject, whom we name Messiah, as enduring all conceivable toils and sufferings while he struggles against implacable enemies. These we may call the red flowers, which tell of contest and blood; and they give us a new insight into the history of that Prince for whom we seek: they hint that He who is to "bruise the serpent's head," and establish a perpetual, peaceful kingdom, will do it by contest; will enter into sympathy with our race by sharing its toils and miseries.

The other class of Psalms describe the hero in triumph and glory. In them he appears as a magnificent Ruler, King of nations, or, at times, as a Priest of illustrious order. The completeness of his

victory, the universality of his dominion, and the willing homage of the nations are minutely delineated. The divine element also of Messiah's character here clearly appears. He is "Son of God," in a new and peculiar sense. All these, it will be noticed, are new features in the advancing portrait.

It seems more natural to take up first those psalms which describe the hero in humiliation, contest, and struggle, before he attains the crown. In these songs of sorrow the imagery is taken from the sufferings of a pious Israelite, say David, who seeks to live a godly life in the midst of wicked enemies. Keeping in mind that we are studying poetry, we shall not expect to find every phrase and figure literally fulfilled in Messiah. The general scope and import of a whole piece should rather be regarded. Still, we shall at times be startled to find that what seemed a figure, comes out in the fulfilment as literal fact. Often some one specific trait marks a whole paragraph or psalm as Messianic.

The dramatic style is prominent in some places. At times we have the Man of Sorrows uttering sadly his own grief; then suddenly Jehovah himself steps upon the stage, and we listen to the voice of the Eternal honoring his Son.

[Psalm 16.]

A Holy One in the abyss of suffering expresses his

confidence in the goodness and power of God to deliver him. Though about to die he will "rest in hope;" for, says he, "thou wilt not leave my soul in *Sheol*, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy."

The general drift of the psalm is doubtless expressive of some scene in David's experience. And until the fulfilment of the latter part in Christ, the interpretation must have been difficult; hence the Jewish legend, that the body of David did not corrupt in the grave, and would not till the resurrection. Peter, in Acts 2: 26—32, gives us the true interpretation. Quoting the passage, he remarks that David as a prophet here "spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption." Paul, in Acts 13: 35—37, refutes the legend respecting David, and declares the prediction fulfilled in Christ. Taking this interpretation of Peter and Paul, we find here our first intimation of the bitter sufferings and death of that Holy One who was to come. He must enter the dark realm of *Sheol* ere he passes up the path of life into the presence of joy and pleasures. What a glance is this into that cup of humiliation which the Holy One must drink. To what a length was the Psalmist borne in his tearful yet joyful soliloquy, to utter thus the great truth of a dying Lord, and of his resurrection.

[Psalm 40.]

The subject of this psalm contemplates the sufferings he had incurred and the deliverance wrought for him, mentions the reasons of his condescension, rejoices that he has introduced salvation, and supplicates support and comfort in the bitter trials yet before him.

The interpretation turns upon verses 6 and 7, the import of which seems to be this: sacrifices and offerings not being sufficient to atone for sin, I have come in fulfilment of prophecy to obey the law and preach righteousness.

These words are evidently not referable to the Psalmist himself. When did David learn that sacrifices were unacceptable to God, and instead of them offer himself? Or where in the volume of the book, which must be the Pentateuch, was it written of David that he should come to fulfil the law and preach righteousness?

The stress of the passage lies upon the obedience which should be an acceptable offering for sin. Noticeable also is the dignity of the person. He *descends* to obey, to receive a body, and to preach righteousness. The obedience of this individual, his work and sufferings, are to supplant sacrifices and offerings. He will therefore be Redeemer. He must be God-man. So the author of Hebrews 10: 5, etc., interprets: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God . . . By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once *for all*." He it is who comes to

fulfil the prediction in the Book. This use of the passage shows that the Hebrews themselves regarded it as certainly Messianic.

The Septuagint and New Testament version of the phrase, "mine ears hast thou opened," is here retained as being the probable import of these words, without the figure. Opening the ears was significant of attention and obedience. To offer an atonement that should take the place of sacrifices would of course require a body. Hence probably the Seventy, from whose translation Paul quotes, rendered it, "a body hast thou prepared me." Some other reason now unknown may have existed for this translation. It has at least the sanction of the writer of Hebrews. Hence we may regard this as the first definite prediction of the divine incarnation. Some one, foretold in the scriptures that were written before the time of David, is to receive a body, fulfil the divine law, and preach righteousness.

Reading in the 12th verse calamities for "iniquities," according to the better translators, we find in the whole psalm nothing inconsistent with the character of Christ in his hours of sadness, when he cried to God for help to do his will. But the psalm can be referred to no other person without evident inconsistency.

[Psalm 22.]

The agony of the pious sufferer reaches its climax

in this saddest of songs. The writer must have seemed to hang upon the cross in the place of the dying Redeemer to have delineated so truthfully that great transaction on Calvary.

No scene in the life of David, or of any other man, save him who hung between the thieves on Golgotha, approaches to a fulfilment of this picture. Aware of this, objectors have suggested that the Psalmist personifies the people of Israel. But the marks of individuality are too striking to admit this suggestion, which has indeed nothing in its favor.

Had we no fulfilment in view we might regard the whole of the first part of the psalm to the twenty-first verse as a poetical delineation of the thoughts and words of a pious man suffering the agonies of death. But in the death of Christ occur so many verifications of specific and peculiar thoughts that figure gives way to striking fact.

Take such expressions as the following, and read them in connection with the narratives of Jesus on the cross. Who does not seem to hear the agonized Jesus crying out, in the words of the first verse of this psalm, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In that bitter hour, when the Father seemed to have left him, his own grief, and not the remembered prediction, must have called forth this exclamation, yet so it was written. "All they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord that he would

deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." Matthew says, "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross: he trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God." Does any one believe that these revilers knew that they were fulfilling David's prediction? God "makes the wrath of man to *praise him.*" "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint:" what words more expressive of the relaxing frame suspended for long hours by the nailed hands and feet? "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws:" in that burning thirst which comes upon the victim of crucifixion as the blood ebbs away, Jesus cried out, "I thirst."

"They pierced my hands and my feet." The best authorities tell us that in crucifixion the hands and feet were generally nailed, not tied, to the cross. That this was the case with Christ appears from the remark of the sceptical Thomas, "except I shall see in his hand the print of nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe." And from the remark of Jesus, which so humbled Thomas," "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands." "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself."

This plainly refers to a kind of execution which was unknown in Palestine in the days of David, crucifixion having been introduced centuries afterwards by the Romans.

"They part my garments among them and cast lots for my vesture." We here seem to see Jesus looking down from his cross upon the soldiers as they divide his under-garments and gamble for his coat. "These things," says John, "the soldiers did."

And surely neither the soldiers, nor the infuriated Jews, had any thought of fulfiling prophecy in this matter. Had it occurred to them that they were thus crucifying the promised Messiah they would have shrunk in terror from the deed.

And who but that Spirit, to whom the future is as the present, could have thus delineated in the days of David the minute particulars of a crucifixion scene?

Many expressions—such as, "Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round," "Dogs have compassed me," &c.—are evidently common figures, expressive of the pressure of enemies; for such we need not seek a particular fulfilment. But this is not the case in such specifications as, "They pierced my hands and my feet."

The whole passage is an apt representation of the struggles of soul endured by him "who, in the days of his flesh, offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears."

After this doleful soliloquy, from the twenty-second verse and onward, as if cheered by a new promise and hope, the speaker, in a tone agreeing well with the general spirit of Christ, tells how he will prove his gratitude to God for support and comforts; and

speaks of the conversion and ingathering of the Gentile nations, in a style appropriate only to him who broke down the Jewish partition, and brought in "other sheep not of the Hebrew fold."

[Psalm 69.]

This psalm is worthy of our attention in this connection, though its allusion to Messiah is not so certain as that of the preceding. The general spirit and tone are the same as in the above; and some particular passages receive in Christ a marked fulfilment.

Take the following; "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children." The Evangelists tell us respecting Christ that "neither did his brethren believe in him," before his crucifixion. Again: "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;" the disciples regarded the zeal of Christ in expelling the hucksters from the Temple a fulfilment of these words. "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me," referred to Christ, in Romans 15: 3. "They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Matthew says that they gave to Christ, at his crucifixion, "vinegar mingled with gall."

These particulars might indeed be fulfilled in another than Christ; and hence taken alone might be of doubtful allusion; but coupled with the preced-

ing psalms one can scarce doubt that they refer to the same person.

Glancing back now over these few psalms, what a picture do they give of the work and experience of Emmanuel in his incarnate life! He will come to do the divine will, atone for sin, and preach righteousness. But he shall be opposed, persecuted, and cruelly murdered. This then shall be the experience of the Divine One when he comes down to redeem our race.

But shall the enemies of the Anointed triumph? Where then is the victory, the kingdom and reign of peace, the world-wide blessing? Is our world so debased that even a God-man can not stem the tide of ruin; that whoever enters into organic connection with the seed of Adam must be borne to the general doom, though he were divine? Is there only contest and death before the Christ?

Contest like this ends but in victory. He "who goes forth weeping, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again singing, bearing his sheaves with him." Messiah will exemplify the universal law of progress and triumph, from toil and sorrow, to rest and joy, through *Sheol* up to the presence of joy and pleasures immortal.

The sweet Psalmist had also more cheering visions of the Prince of Peace. He sang pæans as well as dirges. Let us turn now to a class of prophetic songs of another spirit, and learn what visions David may have had of his *exalted* Son and Lord.

Of this class there are several, which so evidently refer to the same person that, if the Messianic character of one be admitted, the others may be received upon the same evidence.

[Psalm 2.]

The second psalm presents the hero as it were in his transition from submission and humiliation to command and conquest. The Psalmist sees, in vision, Jehovah appointing and proclaiming as King his anointed Son; while the hostile nations of the earth in mob-violence rage around him. The several characters are presented to us in vivid, dramatic style. The Prophet first asks the cause of the rage and tumult of the nations, quoting their furious exclamations in their own language; and then warns them of their folly in those terrible words of divine mockery, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall *laugh;* the Lord shall have them in derision!" Next, the voice of God is heard declaring to them, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Then the Anointed steps forth and utters his own commission, "The Lord (Jehovah) hath said unto me, Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten thee." The psalm closes with an admonition to the kings and judges of the earth to submit wisely and meekly to, and rejoice in, the rule of Him whose wrath is consuming; but who will bless all those who put their trust in him.

We find Jehovah here calling this King "Son," in an emphatic and peculiar sense. He is begotten, not simply appointed, King. As a son, begotten of God, he must partake of the divine nature. Kings are admonished to fear him as they would fear God himself. The nations to the uttermost parts of the earth, not the tribes to the ends of Palestine, are given to him for a possession. Rebellion against him is regarded as rebellion against Jehovah. All this is appropriate if referred to Christ, and inappropriate if referred to David, Solomon, or any of their successors, save Christ.

Peter saw the fulfilment of the first verses of this psalm in that first storm of persecution, headed by Jews and Romans, which crucified his Lord, and laid the disciples under the anathema of the Sanhedrim, Acts 4: 25—27. And that persecution has been in effect often repeated in the history of Christianity. Against what else have kings and nations so fiercely raged as against the rule of this Anointed?

In Hebrews 1: 5, the phrase, "Thou art my Son," is quoted to prove Christ's superiority over the angels. (See also Hebrews 5: 5.) The objection sometimes urged that the crushing rule of the iron sceptre, depicted in verse 9, is inconsistent with the idea of the Prince of Peace, is groundless. He is Prince of Peace only to those who will be at peace with him. To the enemies of peace he is always represented as terrible. That ideal of incarnate meekness and

benevolence, Jesus of Nazareth, uttered the most withering denunciations ever breathed against the wicked. Think of that burning sea in which Dives was tormented, and of the "outer darkness," the "wailing and gnashing of teeth," where "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." The flesh creeps with horror at such pictures as he drew by a few terrible words. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of" an angry God, and "*God is angry with the wicked.*" The dashing iron sceptre becomes the avenger of broken law and scorned mercy.

[Psalm 110.]

Of the same import with the above is psalm 110. Both the superscription and the imagery mark the piece as of David's composition. David therefore, the human head of the theocracy, declares that Jehovah offers to share his throne with this person whom David himself calls Lord: "Jehovah said unto *my* Lord, sit thou at my right hand." This intimates a more than human personage.

The fourth verse demands peculiar notice. We have already had some intimation that the Messiah would atone for sin. Here his priestly office is distinctly asserted, and the exalted character of his priesthood intimated. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec." This is peculiar, from the fact that the regal and sacerdotal offices were never

united in the theoracy, unless by wicked usurpers in degenerate times. David and Solomon were great kings, but not priests. This person is to be both king and priest.

His priesthood is also to be not Aaronic, but Melchizedec-like. The peculiarity of Melchizedec was that, in connection with the regal power, he exercised an independent priesthood, to the duration of which there was no defined limit. The inference is that this priesthood may be eternal. "Thou art a priest forever." Hebrews 6: 20, and 7th chapter, show the pertinence of this as a representation of the priesthood of Christ.

The remaining verses of the psalm describe the hero in the victorious pursuit of his enemies, and his supreme sway over the nations. The word rendered Lord in the fifth verse, Adonai, intimates the divinity of this regal priest.

The last verse gives a vivid picture of his conquests under the figure of a warrior pursuing an enemy, in his haste stopping to drink from a brook in the way, and rising refreshed for more vigorous pursuit. To those who find here indications of a vindictive spirit it need only be remarked that the spiritual contests and triumph of Christ are frequently depicted by such figures.

Many New Testament allusions indicate that the psalm was in the days of Christ regarded as undoubtedly Messianic. Christ himself declares that David,

under the guidance of the Spirit here called Messiah "Lord," intimating his divine nature. Matt. 22 : 41, etc. Peter, Acts 2: 34–36, assures the "house of Israel" that the Lord, spoken of in this psalm, is "That same Jesus whom ye have crucified."

[Psalm 45.]

Psalms 45 and 72 present the Anointed as settled in his peaceful kingdom and court with all the emblems of royalty about him. The subjection, suffering, and sorrow, the toil and contest are past. The victory is achieved. The reign of peace has begun.

The heart of the Psalmist overflows as he proceeds to delineate, in the highest vein of oriental poetry, the magnificence of Messiah's court. "Thou art fairer than the children of men : grace is poured into thy lips." "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness." "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness : therefore, (O) God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad."

In accordance with oriental views, the grandeur of the king is in part displayed by the number and

beauty of the females that surround his court. "King's daughters were among thy honorable women." Among them one shines pre-eminent. "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir."

The voluptuous imagery of this description has caused many to regard the psalm as an epithalamium written upon the marriage of Solomon to Pharaoh's daughter.

But the description of the king by no means suits Solomon, who was never a warrior as this favored one had been. Nor does the picture of the queen suit the daughter of Pharaoh, especially in the particulars of the sixteenth and seventeenth verses.

Referring the psalm to Christ, it is all in accordance with other poetical representations of him and his bride, the Church.

The superscription, for the sons of Korah, marks this psalm as one designed for the public worship of the sanctuary. It is Maschil, a devout poem or hymn. This refutes the epithalamium theory. No mere nuptial song would be admitted into the public worship of God. To deny the genuineness of the superscription is a mere device, the genuineness of the whole psalm might as well be denied.

The writer of Hebrews uses verses 6 and 7 of this psalm to prove the superiority of Christ over the angels. And his use of the term God, as applied to

him, is such as to indicate his divinity. He renders it by Theos, God. "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. O God, thy God hath anointed thee, etc." There is an evident absurdity in any interpretation yet given which seeks to evade the divinity here ascribed to this sovereign Lord.

[Psalm 72.]

Altogether similar to the foregoing is this seventy-second psalm. The imagery of the poem is evidently borrowed from the peaceful reign of a righteous king, say Solomon.

We may suppose it to have been written by David, near the close of his life in contemplation of the reign of Solomon, just now commencing under most happy auspices. Full of the glowing thoughts inspired by the prospects of his son, and the promises of eternal dominion in his line, David is borne on by the Spirit of inspiration to depict the reign of that greater Son of whom Solomon was but a type.

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . All kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. . . Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised. . . His name shall endure forever; his name

shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." Here is an evident allusion to the promise made to the patriarchs, in whose "seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed."

Who can imagine a more beautiful and consistent picture of the perfect reign of Christ than this psalm presents? A picture not realized, and not to be realized in any other reign. Zechariah, 9: 10, quotes the eighth verse of the psalm in his description of the extension of Messiah's kingdom, "And his dominion shall be from sea even to sea and from the river even to the ends of the earth."

[Psalm 8.]

We may appropriately close this survey of the Messianic Psalms with the devout reflections of David; when under the starry heavens, looking up to those sailing worlds of light, and viewing them as monuments of the Creator's greatness, in contrast with his condescension to the littleness of man and earthly things, he exclaimed, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

According to the writer of Hebrews, 2: 6–9, the Psalmist here threw himself forward to the contemplation of man as reclaimed and restored to his primeval dignity by that great ideal of humanity, and revelation of Deity, that was to come in his regal descendant and Lord.

Under types drawn from the dominion given to man in his original state, he describes the eternal dominion promised to that Son and Lord who is to be "crowned with glory and honor."

What, indeed, is man that he should be exalted to a participation of the divine dominion? that the great God should come down and fellowship so low a creature? We can only say with the Psalmist, "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth."

So much the "sweet Psalmist" adds to the prophetic idea of Messiah. Looking back we see a marked advancement in the development of this subject. David has set forth distinctly the doctrine of the humiliation, suffering, and sorrow of the Redeemer; his eternal priesthood; and the triumph and splendor of his final reign.

Here again drops the veil over the visions of prophecy. Unless the "Wisdom" of Proverbs refers to Christ, which is doubtful, we have no other additions to Messianic literature in this period. The lyric age closed with Solomon. The theocracy had now reached its zenith and brought forth its choicest earthly fruit. The book of Psalms is the whole of religion and theology set to music.

Two hundred years the world may now rest and live upon the products of this fruitful period. Some new crisis must arise in the theocracy to call forth a new dispensation of revelation. Some other great

spiritual leader or leaders must appear before we can get to another Pisgah.

The theocracy having reached its culmination, in a temporal aspect, and blossomed out in immortal song, begins henceforth to ripen, and exhibit the yellow leaf. The next crisis comes in storm and darkness. But at evening time, for the true people of God, "there shall be light."

# PERIOD III.

## BOOKS OF THE PROPHETS.

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From the sweet melodies of the Psalmist we turn to the less melodious but sublimer strains of the seers who wrote in less hopeful times.

Abraham, Moses, and David exercised the prophetic gift; but, excepting Moses, they were not prophets in the technical sense. What we call distinctively the prophetic order seems to have been founded by Samuel, about 1100 years B. C., and to have continued until the death of Malachi. Their proper and professional vocation was that of religious teachers. They were the preachers of their age. On account of the theocratic form of government they were also directly engaged in what may be called the politics of their nation. Many of them were also sacred poets of a high order. Pious, energetic, far-seeing, and eloquent, they were noble guardians of religion, and apt media for supernatural revelations.

During the first centuries these devout heroes were mainly occupied with the immediate interests

of their people and made slight additions to the canon. If they gave Messianic predictions, no record of them has been preserved, excepting the promise of Nathan to David.

The first prophetic books date from the reign of Uzziah, 800 B. C. From 800 to 700 B. C. has been well called the golden age of prophecy; the age of Joel, Hosea, Isaiah, Amos, Micah, and Nahum, than whom no more eloquent human teachers have ever spoken or written.

In the Psalms we found the Messianic predictions mostly embodied in language and imagery drawn from the experience of the writer. Henceforth we shall see less of the writer, but more of the age and its wants. The Psalmist would be called in common criticism a subjective writer; the later prophets more objective.

Entering upon the study of these books we discover, at once, that the resplendent throne of David and Solomon has begun to crumble. Abuses, corruptions, divisions, and revolutions have passed like a withering simoom over the once fair kingdom. A humiliating subjection and galling servitude stares in the face of the theocracy, which seems decadent, fast rushing to the abyss.

The declension of the theocracy is in itself proof of degeneracy and consequently of divine displeas-

ure. A prominent task of the prophets is to reprove, warn, and threaten the nation for its sins. They portray, in darkest colors, the coming judgments. Yet ever the thunder-cloud is bordered with light. Mercy-drops mingle with the hail of wrath. Over the din of doom rise ever and anon some sweet notes of the eternal harmony and love. They who tell of direst judgment tell also of the divine Redeemer. Standing above the ruins of throne and temple the prophet points his nation forward to Him who would be greater than Solomon, greater than the temple, and whose priesthood and dominion would be eternal.

The prophecies of this period, in connection with the judgments sent upon the theocracy, were designed to turn the people, first from idolatry and then from despondency, to the exercise of a purer faith in God and his promised Son. The several predictions receive their coloring and specific forms from this general aim, modified in each case by the peculiar circumstances of those to whom the prophecy was first given. Parts of the same prophecy differ in some cases according as the prophet has more or less regard to the state of affairs among his people. Thus the second part of Isaiah, being a revelation of the Messiah's character and work designed rather for the study of all ages than for the people and the times of the prophet, differs materially from the first part which was designed particularly for the age preceding the captivity and restoration.

As we have already attained a quite definite outline of the person and work of Messiah, we shall not find hereafter that progressive development which has characterized preceding predictions. What is now needed seems to be to fill up this outline, and by "line upon line" keep it before the world until it shall take full possession of the theocratic people and awaken an irrepressible desire and expectation of the advent of the God-man. The unity of the several predictions must be sought mainly in their common aim, to prepare for the advent; and in the history of the Hebrew people which we cannot now follow in detail.

On this account the predictions as here presented must appear somewhat fragmentary and disconnected. The reader will keep in mind that we are passing in a few pages over the history of ages, and that too of remote ages chronicled only by this brief Hebrew Book. If in these dim periods we can find here and there a footprint of Emmanuel we should be satisfied. The unity of these predictions is the unity of a star which rises and sets and rises again, and shines now clearly, then dimly, and then again is hidden by clouds. No fault of the star that we cannot always see it; fixed up there in its brightness it shines forever; we, in our darkness and revolutions, see it but seldom. But if this Star of Jacob goes not out, but shines on through succeeding centuries, on through unknown eternities, we may follow in confidence

assured that it shines with no borrowed lustre. The periods of eclipse and clouds are no more than man needs to give virtue to his faith. Were Christ always in full view, the miracle of his revelation would seem to cease, and faith would die.

## JOEL.

[Joel 2: 28—32.]

The chronology of the minor prophets is uncertain, except when indicated by their writings. The golden era of prophecy, of which we now treat, called also the Assyrian period, was probably heralded in by the dark, majestic strains of Joel. He comes like the leader of God's great army, full of bodeful cries and omens of ill. God will terribly punish his rebellious people. But upon their repentance he will also stay his judgments, scatter their enemies, and send them the former and the latter rain, fill their floors with wheat and their vats with wine and oil.

From this breath of promise the Spirit lifts up the gloomy bard to utter a promise of the greater, spiritual rain of the last times. "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

The above must be regarded as a prediction of

some signal development of the prophetic spirit, linked, as the following passage shows, to some great crisis in the world's history. "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come."

The Spirit was given largely in the age of Joel, but nothing like a fulfilment of this promise occurred until the Pentecostal revival, where Peter saw the beginning of its fulfilment, when the cloven tongues began to vibrate amongst "Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Egypt, Lybia, and Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians." Acts 2: 1—21.

We have then, in Joel, no direct prediction of Messiah, but, according to Peter, a striking picture of his times; a picture partially fulfilled in the days of Peter, partly since his day, and partly to be yet fulfilled.

The sympathy of nature with God's great spiritual movements received a partial exemplification at the time of the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem, when "blood and fire and pillars of smoke" seemed to hang in the angry heavens. But a more complete fulfilment may be expected ere the "new heavens and earth" appear.

The outpouring of the Spirit upon "servants and

handmaids" strikingly intimates the leveling influence of Christianity which makes no distinction of high or low, bond or free. And such a dispensation of the Spirit is ever regarded as a characteristic of the last times. Thus the first seer, who warned his people of the judgments which were rising in the far horizon, caught also a glimpse of that sun of mercy that should rise behind the storm.

## HOSEA.

[Hosea 2: 16—25; 3: 5; 11: 1.

Cotemporary with Joel and of kindred spirit and aim is the earnest Hosea. The fire that burns in his bosom is kindled by the contemplation of Israel's backsliding and the judgments that must soon come upon his people. Language fails to express the deep emotions that swell within him. Choked with the laboring thought, he is directed to work out in startling symbols the great argument of Israel's ingratitude and shame. But with his expostulations, warnings, and denunciations he is like Joel, permitted to mingle some sweet anticipations of a better day. His vision of the latter day is obscure and general. But some bright strokes assure us that in the promise of a return to David, or David's Son, and hence to Jehovah, and of the peculiar blessings which should ensue, he also sees, "though not nigh," the Star of Jacob. A time is coming when restored Israel shall "sing as in the days of her youth."

"And in that day I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and I will make them to lie down in safety. And I will betroth thee unto me forever." These verses savor of millennial peace and prosperity, and evidently point to a day yet future. "And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people: and they shall say thou art my God." Here Paul finds a prediction of the Catholic spirit of Christianity which gathers out of all lands and nations members of the true fold of God. Rom. 9: 25, 26.

"Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God and David their king." Here, as often afterward, "David's greater Son" is called by his own name. When error and punishment are past and the children of Israel return to God, the promised "Seed" shall sway over them his peaceful sceptre.

Matthew 2: 15, finds in Hosea a prediction of the return of Jesus with Joseph and Mary from Egypt. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt," ch. 11: 1. Israel and Moses, from whose history this figure is borrowed, being types of Christ, the spiritual Israel and second Moses, their call from Egypt becomes

a prediction of the "young child's" flight and return.

## AMOS.

Stern, strong, and terrible the Herdsman of Tekoah lifts up his voice, and a vial of divine wrath is poured through him upon the sinful nations. This done, he retires again to his flocks, unheard of more.

[Amos 9: 8—15.]

As he departs, the spirit of wrath grows calm, and his message ends with a soft gush of light, that falls upon us like a golden sunset after a day of storm.

In this close, so full of promise and hope, the question is answered, "by whom shall Jacob arise?" After the sifting of the house of Israel, and the death of "all the sinners" among God's people, the Lord says, "In that day I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins; and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen which are called by my name." From the fallen house of David shall arise one who shall restore the theocracy to its pristine glory and extend his dominion and blessings over the heathen. The consonance of this passage with the common representations of Messiah's reign is evident. And we know that the extension

of theocratic privileges to the heathen was not contemplated, much less realized, by any of David's line preceding Christ. James, Acts 15: 16, 17, sees this extension begun in the conversion of Gentiles as well as Jews to Christ. The Son of David is even now fast extending his dominion over the heathen who are learning to be called by his name.

With these three prophets began the era now under consideration. Their messages are brief but startling. After an age of dulness and silence their words broke like the first peals of a thunder-storm upon their godless countrymen. And still heavier and more protracted warnings and admonitions followed. Scarce had they ceased to prophecy, when the sublime Isaiah arose, the sun of his era, around whom other prophets shine but as satellites around a primary. Micah also, one of the lesser lights in this grand constellation, now rises into view, flinging upon us some rays from the sun of righteousness.

## MICAH.

[Micah 4: 1—4.]

After predicting the judgments of God against Israel and Judah on account of their sins, assuring them that Zion should be ploughed as a field and Jerusalem become heaps, Micah suddenly drops the dark tale of gathering judgments, and opens his fourth chapter with a glowing, poetical prediction of the final glorious reign of Christ.

After the desolation shall come a period of more than ancient splendor for Zion.

Zion shall be ploughed as a field; "But in the last days it shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

In this charming ode the prophet over-leaps the period of growth and development and gives us a sunny picture of the "last days" when the kingdom of the Prince of Peace shall have reached its culmination. Universal peace and the extension of righteousness over all nations are the prominent characteristics of that golden age to which he points. Evidently no realization of this prediction is found in Hebrew history, nor as yet in any history. The

spirit of the passage is wholly Messianic and Millennial. Yet it is now realized in part, so far as the kingdom of Christ is developed in the life of men.

[Micah 5: 2.]

In chapter fifth the prophet in his rapt discourse turns suddenly to the little town of Bethlehem, and with surprising minuteness foretells the birth-place of Him who should exalt Zion and extend his peaceful reign over the world.

The enemy may gather in troops resolved to smite the Judge of Israel; "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (or from the days of eternity). Yet Israel shall be given up to her enemies, "until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth." Until the "woman's seed" arise to triumph over the enemy.

Former prophets gave us intimations of the tribe and family from which the promised Prince should come. Here we are assured that the native town of David, his type in the regal office, shall be the favored place of the advent. The God-man will, in little Ephratah or Judea-Bethlehem, make his first appearance in our world.

The mind at once adverts to the answer given by the Hebrew scribes and priests to Herod when he

inquired, where Christ should be born. "In Bethlehem of Judea," was the prompt reply, citing Micah for proof. This reply, endorsed by the evangelist as a true interpretation of this prediction, shows what tradition also asserts, that the ancient Jews always expected Messiah to arise out of Bethlehem. Hence the Jewish fiction that Messiah was born at Bethlehem on the day of the final destruction of Jerusalem, and conveyed away into some obscure place to await a suitable time for his manifestation.

Time shamed them out of the fiction, but the prediction of Micah still stood, and the next resort was to explain away the passage, or deny its Messianic reference. Many forced and absurd interpretations have been proposed by skeptics in order to avoid the plain truth that here was a prediction of the birth-place of Jesus the son of Mary.

In striking contrast with the humble birth-place of this ruler is the announcement of his eternal pre-existence.

This too has been an eye-sore to deniers. To express as strongly as possible the eternal being of the Ruler, the prophet declares with a climax that his goings forth have been "from the days of eternity," a phrase meaning unlimited duration. This assertion of his pre-existence stands also in contrast with his birth in time, incarnation.

The devices by which those, who held to a carnal Messiahship, have sought to evade this interpretation,

declaring that only the decree of God relative to him was from the days of eternity, or that "ancient times" satisfies the text, are sufficiently refuted by the meaning of the word eternity, by the climacteric form of the expression, the contrast indicated between this assertion and that relating to his appearance in Bethlehem, and the utter want of force and significance in the passage, if eternal pre-existence be not attributed to this Ruler. Certainly the prophet could not have better expressed the doctrine of pre-existence than he has done in these words.

To this it may be subjoined that one came forth in due time from Bethlehem Ephratah, and established a spiritual kingdom, which is rapidly extending over the true Israel, and seems destined to realize the prophet's first golden vision.

## ISAIAH.

Isaiah, the central sun of all prophecy, around whom the lesser stars revolved, gives character and limit to this golden age.

Rightly named the evangelist of the Old Testament, no other prophet approaches Isaiah in the extent and richness of his Messianic predictions. Particularly in the latter part of his book he rises above the sad and discouraging scenes about him, soars afar into the distant ages, and lives in the contemplation of that sublimer period to which all prophecy and all history point.

As in the Psalms, we find the Messiah here set forth in two distinct characters. In the first thirty-nine, and in the fifty-fifth and fifty-ninth chapters, he is described as the glorious restorer of Israel and ruler of the world. In the other chapters he appears as a prophet-priest, richly endowed with all excellencies, yet humbling himself as a man of sorrows in order to redeem the degraded and cursed race of men, and impart to them salvation. Here it grows clear that the purpose of Emmanuel's subjection and suffering is to work out an atonement.

In studying this prophet we should keep in mind that he wrote in the period of Assyrian oppression, and with special reference to the degeneracy and wickedness of his age, and to the overwhelming chastisements about to be inflicted. From Assyrian and Chaldean bondage he glanced ever and anon forward to the great Deliverer and his reign of righteousness. Striding forward to the times of the captivity, he frequently took his stand midway in the future, and thence prophesied backward and forward, as if he were living a century or two after he had been sawn asunder.

[Isaiah 2: 2—4.]

The first Messianic passage in Isaiah is a copy, possibly the original, of that mild, autumnal picture of millennial days already exhibited by Micah. Whether Isaiah quotes from Micah, or the latter from

the former, must remain uncertain. As they were probably cotemporaries it matters not who first recorded the vision vouchsafed to both. Nor is it anything against the prediction that the later writer depicts it in the express words of the earlier. Other instances might be found where one prophet utters his vision in the language of a predecessor.

It shows us how full the prophetic mind was of the latter-day glory when different voices join to sing of the exaltation of Zion above the hills, and the flowing of many nations unto the mountain of the Lord, and the house of the God of Jacob, and of that age of peace when swords shall be beaten into plowshares and spears into pruning-hooks.

[Ch. 4: 2.]

From this vision of future blessedness the prophet turns again to expostulate with the house of Jacob and warn them of coming judgments. Between him and the days of prosperity lie days of darkness and mourning. But light shall follow the darkness. In that day of humiliation and shame, "The branch of the Lord shall be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel."

Who or what is this beautiful branch of the Lord, and excellent fruit of the earth? Evidently not the people themselves, for it is to be beautiful and excellent *for* them that escape the judgments.

Branch or shoot of David is often used for Son of David. By analogy we infer that branch of the Lord, or shoot of Jehovah is Son of God; and hence we find here an intimation of the divinity of the branch; while the epithet, fruit of the earth, seems to intimate his humanity.

The import of the passage is then, that after the afflictions which shall come upon the people of Judah and Jerusalem, a remnant shall survive who shall be blessed and glorified by One who is at once divine and human, branch of Jehovah and fruit of earth.

[Ch. 7 : 14.]

Passing on now to the reign of Ahaz, and the occasion when Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the king of Israel "went up toward Jerusalem to war against it," we find the prophet exhorting Ahaz to trust in the Lord, and for his encouragement bidding him, "ask a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above."

But Ahaz, distrustful and determined to seek help from his heathen neighbors rather than from God, under a hypocritical pretence of unwillingness to tempt God by asking a sign, refuses the prophet's counsel. Thereupon the latter sternly rejoins that, whether Ahaz desire it or not, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel (God-with-us). And before the child "shall know to refuse the

evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings."

History teaches us that within three years, the time that might intervene between the conception of a child and his ability to distinguish "between the good and the evil," Rezin and Remaliah's son were driven from their domains. This was then a fulfilment of the prediction as Ahaz probably understood it. The language of the prophet may be rendered in the present tense, "Behold a virgin conceives and bears a son," &c. The vision is vivid and clear as if present to the eye of the prophet. Ahaz and others of the time might so understand it, and the event would confirm this interpretation. But was there not a deeper significance in this sign? Who was the virgin, and who the child Immanuel? Certainly the virgin was not the prophet's wife, spoken of in the next chapter, for she already had a son old enough to follow the prophet; a son never named Immanuel. And Maher-shalal-hash-baz of the eighth chapter is introduced as a different character and for a different purpose; verse 8 shows that he is not Immanuel.

We have already been pointed to the "woman's seed." Micah also spoke of a time "when she who travaileth shall have brought forth" him of Bethlehem Ephratah. Evidently stress is laid upon the maternal ancestry of the promised one, contrary to Hebrew, and all oriental custom. This prepares us to find in this prediction more than met the view of

Ahaz. We may also keep in mind here that in nearly all ancient nations and religions, particularly the Asiatic, have been found traces of a belief in a Messiah who should be born of a virgin. Note, moreover, that the term virgin, used in the passage, always means young, unmarried women; unspotted chastity being implied.

Whom now shall we regard as this virgin, if not her who is spoken of as the virgin-mother of Jesus, in whose birth, Matthew tells us, this prediction was fulfilled? Who else than Jesus can be said to be God-with-us, God incarnate?

And without the interpretation of the evangelist, would it not begin to dawn upon us that Immanuel, as a new type of existence, a union of the divine and human, will enter our race by a supernatural generation?

It is objected to this interpretation that it virtually destroys the sign given to Ahaz and his people, implying that no virgin's child was born before the expulsion of Rezin and Pekah.

To this it may be replied that the evident design of the prophet's message is to lead the people to trust in God for deliverance from their enemies. The partial fulfilment afforded within three years was enough to strengthen their faith and calm their minds. The enigma of the divine generation may have been thrown out for the study and confirmation of later ages.

Those who deny the Messianic allusion abound in conjectures which refer the passage to other persons. But as each new theorist eats up his predecessor, we may safely leave them to demolish each other. A confirmation of the Messianic interpretation is found in the ninth chapter, to which we now turn.

[Ch. 9: 1—7.]

The region of Zebulun and Naphtali lying along the north and west of the sea of Galilee, and inhabited by a mixture of Hebrews and of pagans, was peculiarly exposed to the attacks of enemies and to the corrupting influence of heathenism. In the days of Christ we learn that this district was held in great contempt by other parts of Palestine.

Fixing his prophetic eye upon this region, Isaiah depicts it in its worst condition. Seeking "unto wizards that peep and mutter," "hardly bestead and hungry," "they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward, and look downward; and behold trouble and darkness and dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness."

Yet for this darkest region, in its darkest hour, the seer has a word of hope and promise. Throwing himself into the future he now exclaims, This "people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

As of old, by the hand of Gideon, God miracu-

lously overthrew the Midianites in these regions, so again will he appear for their deliverance and illumination; not by the "battle of the warrior with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood," but by a divine light and power. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders." The region of darkness is then to be illuminated by that marvellous "child" of which we have before heard. And Galilee is to be peculiarly the theatre of his labors. So much seems implied here.

We know well who in after times was called the "Light of the world," and made Galilee the field of his special efforts. Matt. 4: 12—16. We remember Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin where "most of his mighty works were done." And although few recognized the great Light in him, yet here was gathered that little band of heroes, long contemptuously called Galileans, through whose ministry the light has spread and is spreading the earth around.

The restoration from captivity may have given a partial and typical fulfilment of this promise; but no adequate fulfilment can be found elsewhere than in the ministry of the Galilean Jesus, the child of the virgin. We find here, therefore, a specification of the particular field of labor that shall be chosen by Him who, as we have before learned, is to "come forth from Bethlehem Ephratah," and to be called

also "out of Egypt." Thus is item after item added to the unfolding story.

But more remarkable than aught else in this passage are the divine names and attributes ascribed to this royal child.

"His name shall be called Wonderful (miraculous), Counsellor (wisdom), the mighty God, the everlasting Father (Father of eternity), the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

The custom of ascribing divine attributes to merely human rulers was a heathen custom ever abhorrent to the theocratic people. Such an application of divine titles by a Hebrew prophet whose special calling and aim was to exalt God and humble man, would have been monstrous. Hence the absurdity of referring this passage to Hezekiah, or any other mere man, as some have done. Part of these titles might indeed, if standing alone, be applied to a mortal, but nothing less than blasphemy would ascribe such terms as "Everlasting Father," or Father of eternity, which *must* imply a divine attribute, to any one who was not indeed God. Moreover, Hezekiah, to whom many skeptics would refer the passage, was at this time a mere child in most unpromising circum-

stances, and he never exercised any dominion or decided influence over Galilee, where this great Light was pre-eminently to shine.

The proposition to interpret these divine titles as belonging to the one who gives the government, rather than to the one who receives it, is evidently a mere device to wrest the passage from Christ; a device contradicted both by the plain reading of the text, and the mention of so many divine titles; an absurd enumeration, if the design were not to apply them to the regal child.

It is no objection to Messianic interpretation that political blessings seem to be promised. The prophets constantly represent the reign of Messiah as bringing both temporal and spiritual mercies to the theocratic people.

[Ch. 11: 1—10.]

The Assyrian king, as a sword in the hand of God, should perform Jehovah's work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem, taking the spoil and prey, and treading down the people of Jehovah's wrath like mire in the streets, until the time for punishing the fruit of his stout heart should come. But let it not be surmised that Israel shall be utterly cut off. This plant of centuries must live till it brings forth its Christ. The remnant of Jacob shall return unto the mighty God.

The house of David, also, though prostrate as a

fallen tree, shall not wholly die. From the root of the prostrate stalk shall spring up a shoot to bless the world and introduce the age of peace.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove (decide, allot) with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."

Here the prophet evidently, by a single leap, passes from the restoration of the remnant of Jacob to Palestine, on to the advent of that branch of Jesse whose kingdom was of the truth, who spake as never man spake, and who commenced his sublime discourses with beatitudes for the poor in spirit and the meek, to whom he promised the inheritance of earth and the kingdom of heaven.

Having thus described the character and policy of this righteous branch, he again passes in silence the long period lying between the commencement and

the completion of the Messiah's work, and presents to us a brief picture of his reign of peace after all things have become subject to his dominion.

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's (adder's) den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

Here we have in highly poetical figures another prediction of that millennial era, that coming age of gold, in which the nations have ever believed, and for which they long. An age that now begins to be realized so far, and only so far, as the rude nations catch the spirit of the Prince of Peace, and are grafted into the branch of Jesse. An age that dawns and rises slowly upon our world; but for which the world can wait in confident expectation.

After this glance into the far, bright depth of futurity, the prophet again falls back to the earlier history of Messiah's reign and tells us of the gathering of his kingdom.

"In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which

shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious (or, his dwelling, abode, shall be glory)."

The concordance of these passages, with other Messianic and millennial passages, is obvious.

That this branch could not be Hezekiah, as some have conjectured, is evident from the fact that he was already several years old, and that his reign never gave promise of any such extraordinary blessings as are here predicted. Moreover, the house of Jesse or David had not yet fallen, and hence there could be no propriety in the figure of a branch, springing from its roots. Neither had there been a dispersion of the people in the days of Hezekiah from which a restoration need be promised.

Paul tells us in Rom. 15: 8—12, that "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promise made unto the fathers;" that "There shall be a root of Jesse, and he shall rise to reign over the Gentiles;" quoting from Isaiah, as above, to prove that the Gentiles are called to share in the blessings of the Gospel. And the Revelator is told that, "The Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book," Rev. 5: 5. And again, Rev. 22: 16, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David."

[Ch. 32: 1, 2, and 15—20.]

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

There may be here, as probably in some other places, reference first to Hezekiah and his reign, as types of Christ and his dispensation. But the exalted energy and tender beauty of the passage carries us above and beyond any merely human ruler. He who shall reign in righteousness, and be our shelter from storm and tempest, be living waters in a parched land, and a rock in whose shadow the fainting traveller may recline, can be none other than the anointed branch of Jesse, the friend of the heavy-laden and weary, the rock of ages and the fountain of living water.

Verses 15—20 give us another picture of the dispensation of the Spirit and the final reign of peace, worthy to be set by the side of former millennial pieces. Desolation shall be upon the land of the degenerate people, "Until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field —and the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places. . . Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters."

With this promise of the Spirit, and this sweet benediction, we leave the first division of Isaiah.

We have thus far found occasional gleams of light flashing down to cheer an age of turmoil and fear and darkness. These predictions are, however, but pledges of what this great prophet was commissioned to reveal. He here spake particularly for his age.

In the second part of his book we shall find him writing more like one who has escaped from the dust and strife of his age, and is permitted to live in distant centuries; with an eye to see, a heart to feel, and a voice to utter for everlasting time the moving story of a suffering Redeemer.

## SECOND PART OF ISAIAH.

This nobler part of Isaiah's noble book was probably written fifteen or twenty years after the first part. In the evening of his stormy life he seems to have withdrawn his mind somewhat from the saddening scenes about him, and to have dwelt more in the contemplation of the greater and more glorious events of the future.

Date and sequence of time are not much regarded in these prophecies. The writer at times seems to speak from his own age, then from the age of the captivity, seating himself in vision beside the exiles, and while their harps hang upon the willows, seizing his and pouring forth his moving strains. Then

again he seems to run forward and act a part in the tragical scenes connected with the ministry and martyrdom of Christ.

The last twenty-six chapters contain in substance the sublimest drama of all history. Isaiah alone of the prophets seems to have seen in one great picture the whole process of redemption. No other had such complete vision of the Man of Sorrows, and the import of his work. His accurate description of a suffering Saviour may be regarded as the main peculiarity of this second part of his work, and that which has brought upon him the persecution of modern scepticism.

Says Professor Stuart, "It is only when chapters 40—66 are received in the light of a great Messianic development—a series of predictions respecting the person, the work, and the kingdom of Christ—that the earnestness, the protracted length, the fulness, the deep feeling, the holy enthusiasm, the glowing metaphors and similes, and the rich and varied exhibitions of peace and prosperity can well be accounted for. The writer, in taking such a stand-point, uses the exile and the return from it as the basis of his comparisons and analogies. It was a rich and deeply interesting source from which he might draw them. Any other solution of the whole phenomena is, to my mind at least, meager and unsatisfactory."

Our notices of specific passages must be brief on account of their number and extent. This is, how-

ever, less to be regretted, since the predictions have received such a marked fulfilment in the person and work of Christ, that no other commentary than the Gospels seems needed. It is also noteworthy that the same person is evidently spoken of in the 40th, 42nd, 49th, 50th, 53rd, and 61st chapters. Hence whatever is attributed to him in one of these places must be understood to be assumed in all the others.

[Ch. 40: 1—5.]

In the preceding chapter the prophet foretold the Babylonish captivity, as the consummation of the judgments which he had been sent to predict.

But he now comes with messages of mercy, and appropriately introduces his second book with consolation. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

"The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high-way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

There is here a reference no doubt to the return of the Hebrews from Chaldean captivity. But the inspired Evangelists as certainly found here a prediction of the Baptist who heralded in Messiah. Matt. 3: 3. Let it be noted also that the way is to be prepared, not for the people to return to their possessions, but for the Lord to come and visit his people.

The voice of John has been long since heard in the wilderness, preaching repentance and preparation for the advent of Messiah. The wilderness or desert in which he sojourned was a fit type of the spiritual desert presented at that time by the theocracy. The glory of the Lord has been revealed; and the time is hastening when "all flesh shall see it together."

[Ch. 42: 1—9.]

Jehovah here calls upon his people to behold his elect servant, in whom his soul delights, and upon whom he has put his own spirit, and who shall "bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Then he describes the meek and gentle character of that elect servant: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax (expiring wick) shall he not quench." Yet he shall exercise great authority. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." From verse 5 onward, Jehovah directly

addresses this his elect One, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people (i. e. a Mediator), for a light of the Gentiles (the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, 9: 2); to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house."

The concordance of these verses, with other Messianic passages, leads us at once to see in this elect servant Him who humbled himself and took the form of a servant; and who came to open the blind eyes and the prison-doors; and to establish a kingdom of peace. His meek and peaceful spirit, and his office as mediator, or "covenant of the people," forbid the reference of the passage, which some have suggested, to Cyrus. Certainly Cyrus was no mediator, not even a religious reformer. Neither could Isaiah be considered as that mediator through whose agency the Gentiles were to be converted. And as arbitrary as either of the above would be the reference of the term servant to the prophetic order in general—a reference contradicted by the import of parallel passages, and by the very term servant, which is used only for a single individual, not collectively for many. Much less can the whole people of Israel be meant by this servant. The character ascribed to him is the opposite of that charged upon the people, and he is to be a mediator, or covenant, for them.

Several passages are found in the New Testament confirmatory of the Messianic interpretation. Matt. 11: 18—21, quotes the first verses of this chapter, and declares them to be fulfilled in the humble demeanor of Christ, who would not strive and cry against his enemies. The devout Simeon sees, in the divine child of Mary, "a light to lighten the Gentiles." And a voice from Heaven proclaims to the Baptist, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased"—equal to, "mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." Verse 7 figuratively and beautifully describes that spiritual redemption which Christ came to effect for them "that sit in darkness" and the "prison-house."

[Ch. 49.]

Hitherto the types and imagery drawn from the captivity have been very prominent, and the predictions respecting Messiah have stood in contrast with the evils of exile, or as antetypes of Cyrus and the restoration. Henceforth, we see less reference to the exile and restoration. Christ and his spiritual redemption fill the vision, and are minutely described.

This forty-ninth chapter may be regarded as a dramatic introduction to the succeeding Messianic chapters. We may regard the scene as laid about the close of the public ministry of our Lord, and the dialogue as carried on by Messiah and Jehovah.

In the first four verses the chosen servant of the

Lord declares to the nations his divine commission, and bemoans the inadequate results of his labors amongst the tribes of Jacob. "The Lord called me from the womb"—"made my mouth like a sharp sword," and "hid me in his quiver"—saying, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. But, he adds, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought;" yet says he, in confidence, "my work (reward) is with my God." Thereupon Jehovah replies encouragingly from the fifth verse onward, assuring him that but a small part of his mission pertains to Israel. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." Though despised and abhorred of the Hebrews, and made a servant of rulers; yet kings shall see and arise, and princes shall worship Him whom Jehovah has given "for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth." Then follows a pleasing picture of his kind offices and services for the redeemed. He will say to the prisoners, "Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves: they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." A way shall be prepared over mountains and vallies, and the people of the Lord "shall come from far, from the north and from the west, and from

the land of Sinim." The remainder of the chapter is occupied with rich and cheering promises and exhortations to Zion.

Parallel passages, and the general agreement of the chapter with the whole tenor of Messianic prophecy, and the difficulty of any other interpretation, lead us to regard this servant of God and shepherd of Israel to be the same as the elect Servant before spoken of; and this interpretation is confirmed by Paul, in Acts 13: 47, where he quotes from this chapter to prove that the Gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles.

[Ch. 50.]

Again the Lord, in distinction from the Lord God who commissioned him and helps him, declares in person the iniquity of Israel, his own qualifications for the work of redemption, and the ignominy imposed upon him in his humiliation.

"I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

The chapter closes with an exhortation and warning to those who are in darkness to trust in the name of the Lord, and not to attempt to walk in the light of their own fire and the sparks of their own kindling.

Christ, in Luke 18: 32, 33, referring evidently to this place, tells his disciples that he shall "be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on and

scourged," in fulfilment of what is written by the prophets concerning him. And in that barbarous transaction, called his trial, we are told that "they spit in his face," and "buffeted him," and "smote him with the palms of their hands," and with a reed.

So accurately were the words of this prophecy fulfilled.

[Ch. 52: 13, and ch. 53.]

This prophetic evangel reaches its climax in the passage to which we now come. We have already had hints of the humiliation and suffering in store for Immanuel. But as yet we have had no clear and connected statement of the cause, manner, and object of this humiliation; or of the relation of his sufferings to his triumph and our salvation. But here is given in connection and in detail the great catastrophe and all its bearings. We are to learn that the Christ is to be both priest and victim, and by a voluntary self-sacrifice atone for our sins. That his immolation, moreover, is to be effected by the mistaken rage of those for whom he dies.

In order to understand the prophet here, we should place ourselves between the humiliation and glorification of the Messiah. Taking that position, Isaiah describes the humiliation as already past; and the exaltation, which is to be the consequence of his sufferings, as in the future. Other instances might be pointed out where the condition of an achievement

is narrated in the past tense, and the achievement itself in the future, though both may be actually in coming time.

The style of these passages is highly dramatic. In verse 13 of chapter 52, Jehovah himself steps forward and, pointing to his representative, says, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently (prosper), he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."

Then, turning to the Son, he proceeds respecting his sufferings, which are regarded as just passed, "As many were astonished at thee;" here parenthetically throwing out to the hearers the reason why many had been astonished ("his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men"); continuing then to speak of him in the third person, "So now," in his exaltation, "shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him (in his presence): for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

Under the marred visage and form of this divine servant we readily trace the suffering and contempt endured by the Man of Sorrows; while the purification and sanctification which he is to effect in his followers is intimated by a figure drawn from Jewish sprinklings and lustrations. These followers, moreover, are to be gathered from many nations, and amongst them kings shall approach in silent reverence.

[Ch. 53: 1.]

But, notwithstanding his followers come from many climes, multitudes, apparently the great mass of mankind, yet stand aloof. The future may bring trophies, but what has been yet accomplished? "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Who listens to prophecy, and discerns the omnipotence displayed in the advent? The God is not seen through the man. Men disbelieve the Gospel because they are blind to the divine power revealed in Christ.

Verse 2. Some who are now convinced that this servant of God is the Messiah, state, next, the reasons why they had been unbelieving and had maltreated this pious sufferer. He had not appeared in the form and style which they anticipated. They were looking for the splendid entry of a great king, but instead of that, "He grows up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Instead of a towering cedar, he comes up as a little sprout from the root of David. He commands no respect and attention from the world.

Verse 3. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Verse 4, 5. But we were deceived. He was

magnanimous and gracious above our conception. It was benevolence and love for us that humbled him; not the divine displeasure, as we supposed. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." Here is the whole story of redemption, set in contrast with the false doctrine of the Jews, that whoever suffers is receiving the penalty of some evil deed. A doctrine which the book of Job would have corrected, if they had learned its true design. It is scarcely necessary to refer the reader to the fulfilment of these verses in the life of Christ.

Matt. 8: 17 gives a lower and literal fulfilment of verse 4, "He bare our infirmities and sicknesses." Matt. 20; 28, and 1 Pet. 2: 24, "He gave his life a ransom for many," "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," refer to the higher and main fulfilment, the removal of our spiritual infirmities, "That we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Verse 6. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." This is the reason of all his sufferings. The burden of our sin was rolled upon him. Wounds, bruises, and stripes, positive sufferings, were inflicted upon him,

by virtue of which we go free, and attain peace with God.

We have next a more specific enumeration of his trials with special reference to his meekness, patience, and silent, heroic fortitude.

Verse 7. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

It was not without significance that the Baptist said of Christ, "Behold the Lamb of God." We are told, Matt. 26: 49—63, how he—for whom staunch friends were ready to wield the sword, and who might have had a legion of angels to back every disciple—yielded without resistance to his enemies, and was led away to be tried by a sanhedrim that had already decreed his death. And how amid the false accusations and insults heaped upon him, and the contradictions of suborned witnesses, he sat in silence. "And the high priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou me nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace." Who else ever came so lamb-like and silent to the slaughter, under similar circumstances? Think what consequences had followed if that majestic and eloquent form, who had driven the profane rabble from the temple, and at whose calm but decided, "I am he," the soldiers fell to the ground, had arisen in his divine wrath to defend himself before that servile

senate! We can imagine how perjured witnesses and fore-sworn judges would have slunk away from his piercing gaze and withering rebukes. But none of this. "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." "When he was reviled he reviled not again. When he suffered he threatened not."

Verse 8. His sufferings end in a violent and untimely death. "He was taken away by distress and judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off from the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken."

Verse 9. "And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death;" (they appointed his grave with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death:) "because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

Christ's murderers doubtless designed to bury him, as they had executed him, between thieves. "He was numbered with the transgressors," Mark 15: 28. But he was buried by a man of rank and influence, "a *rich* man of Arimathea, in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock." "Because he had done no violence." "Pilate said, I find no fault in this man," Luke 23: 4. "Neither was any deceit in his mouth." "Neither was guile found in his mouth," 1 Pet. 2: 22.

Verse 10. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." It was then by the

fore-ordination of God that he was given up to the malice of enemies. And if so, it was for some great and gracious purpose. Here the theme changes, and the prophet is led to look forward to the results of this divine humiliation.

"When his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Having, by the sacrifice of his life, according to divine appointment, redeemed mankind, he shall at length see the reward of his labors. His numerous converts and the eternity of his reign are predicted, under the common forms of blessing in that age, by long life and numerous offspring.

Paul says of Christ that God "made him to be sin (sin-offering) for us, who knew no sin," 2 Cor. 5: 21. And 1 John 2: 2, "He is the propitiation of our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

Verse 11. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." As the husbandman sees in harvest with satisfaction the reward of his former toil, and finds the bread that he had once "cast upon the waters," so shall this divine servant see in due time the fruit of his mediatorial toils and sufferings, and "be satisfied."

"By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities."

His sacrifice shall be rich in results. Many justi-

fied souls shall be given him. He shall *justify* them by *bearing their sins*. Not simply impart encouragement and instruction to them. This chapter is a great sermon on "vicarious sacrifice."

The whole argument is summed up in the last verse, where it is promised that his sacrifice, atonement, and intercession shall end in victory; and his triumphs are portrayed under the figure of a worldly conqueror.

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." So ends this greatest chapter of Messianic Prophecy.

It could not be that such a chapter should fail of many severe attacks from sceptics.

The earlier Jews regarded it as certainly Messianic. But after its fulfilment in Christ a new interpretation was needed to meet the Christians. Moreover, the doctrine of a suffering Messiah was ever repugnant to Jewish pride, and hence few could reconcile, or cared to reconcile, this with other passages descriptive of a triumphant leader. Only a pious few, of liberal mind, mastered the idea of a vicarious atonement by the incarnate God. The doctrine of the cross was to "the Jew a stumbling-block."

The Christian church has always found here the culmination of Messianic Prophecy. With the exception of that knowing school of modern date which foreordained that there should be no miraculous revelation of the future found in the Bible, no objector to the Messianic interpretation of this chapter appears on Christian ground. And Neology but tags after Rabbinism; only out-doing the Rabbins in its stumbling unbelief.

The chapter refers so evidently to Christ when interpreted as the Gospel interprets it, that a lengthy reply to objectors is not needed. The objection to the idea of a suffering Saviour arises from a partial view of Messianic revelation, and from that pride of reason which looks with jealousy upon the inspired seer, and with hatred upon whatever tends to humble man, and make him feel the need of a Saviour.

Christ declares that his sufferings were foretold by the prophets. And when, if not here? It is no objection to these predictions that they are blended with others which refer to the restoration from Babylonish exile, so that the people of that age could not separate them. It is the manner of prophecy to blend the type and the antetype. Prophecy aimed, not to inform the Jews accurately when Messiah would come, but to keep them looking forward to *a* time when the great Deliverer should appear.

The interpretation of this whole passage depends upon who is the "righteous servant," of whom it

treats. The term servant is applied to any one who executes a divine purpose, and hence is specially applicable to Him who comes to execute God's highest purpose relative to man.

No other than Christ could have fulfilled all, or the most prominent features of the prophecy.

The whole tenor of the passage contradicts the hypothesis that this servant is the whole Jewish people or a part of them collectively. Certainly they never suffered either innocently or voluntarily. Moreover, they are represented as saying that this righteous servant suffered for them; of course then they were not the sufferers. The conjecture that a part, the better part, of the people suffered for the others is a mere groundless and inconsistent conjecture, hostile to the whole spirit of God's government.

Equally groundless is the interpretation which refers the passage to the prophetic order, as such. The prophets were not a distinct class of men, as were the priestly and regal orders. They were isolated individuals selected here and there by Providence to instruct the people. Anything of a sacerdotal nature, particularly making such an atonement for sin as is here spoken of, was foreign to their calling. They would have shrunk from the thought of applying such a chapter as this fifty-third of Isaiah to themselves. The prophets certainly, above all other men, looked forward to Messiah, who was to realize the ideal of their order and end their calling.

And they were far from the thought of making atonement for the sins of their people.

In this chapter the prophet evidently includes himself amongst the people for whom the righteous servant suffered.

To the objection that the doctrine of expiation for sin by sacrificial offerings is repugnant to the spirit of revelation, it need only be replied that the doctrine of expiation by the substitution of a mere creature is indeed repugnant. But precisely here lies the rich significance of Messianic revelation. The sacrifice here proposed is not a creature, but a divine being, who could, by virtue of his eternal righteousness and his exaltation above creature-obligations, perform works of supererogation on which might rest an atonement. And as the words of the prophet in this chapter certainly express the doctrine of such an atonement as clearly as Hebrew language could do it, we infer, on this ground also, that the reference cannot be to a creature. Hence the apostles of Christ in their teachings made this prophecy the basis of their doctrine of atonement. 1 Pet. 2 : 24.

Let it be noted that the same person, according to this chapter, suffers, dies, and is afterward glorified, and receives the promise of a great inheritance. Parallel passages from other parts of the book, and from other books, might be cited confirmatory of the

Messianic interpretation. But the above is deemed sufficient.

The remaining chapters all evidently refer to the same person and the same great events. The next chapter is occupied with promises to the church, and exhortations to rejoice in view of the great salvation and enlargement that should accrue under the reign of Christ. For the sake of brevity only a few of the passages in these chapters, which refer more immediately to the person and work of the Redeemer, are here particularly examined.

[Ch. 55: 1—5.]

The fifty-fifth chapter opens with an invitation to all who desire it to come and participate in the salvation provided by the suffering Saviour. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

How like the tender and gracious calls of Christ himself—"If any man thirst let him come unto me

and drink"—"This is my body broken for you," take and eat, "for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed"—"The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life"—"I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst—If any man eat of this bread he shall live forever—Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life."

The "sure mercies of David" are embodied in this "living bread"—"Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people." So Christ came "to *bear witness* to the truth"—and is called the "faithful and true witness." He is also the leader or "captain of our salvation," and "the Prince of the kings of the earth." His dominion shall be far extended. "Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that know not thee shall run unto thee." The concordance of all these verses with other Messianic Prophecy is evident. The ingathering of strange or Gentile nations settles the Messianic reference.

The prophet next turns to admonish, warn, and expostulate with Israel and others respecting their sins, and the great movements of Providence and grace which have been predicted. Frequent refer ence is made to the great salvation that is soon to be introduced.

[Ch. 59: 20.]

"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord." Who should this be, if not He who has ever been called pre-eminently "the Redeemer?" He who "was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." So Paul quotes the passage as a prediction referring to Gospel times. Rom. 11: 26.

Verse 21 contains a promise of the continuance of the Spirit of Christ and of a godly seed forever.

Then follow several chapters full of exalted poetry relating to Christ and his church. Chapters that sound like a divine oratorio; prophet, people, Immanuel, God himself, alternately, and in chorus joining to sing of the great salvation. Strains these, that shall only be rightly sung when the church militant becomes triumphant; when the "redeemed of the Lord shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads." Two passages, presenting the Messiah in different attitudes, may yet be specificated. In the first, he comes to "preach good tidings" to the mourning captives; he comes meekly and lovingly with tender consolations.

In the other, we see him just after a terrible battle with his enemies, his "garments dyed in their blood," "the day of vengeance in his heart," marching "in the greatness of his strength," to bring the year of redemption to his people.

[Ch. 61: 1—4.]

"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified."

The imagery is here taken from Chaldean captivity, and in a lower sense the passage may be a prediction of deliverance from it. But the speaker is evidently the same who has been the subject of the preceding chapters. And the complete fulfilment of the passage could only be found in Him who, in the full consciousness of his divinity, read and expounded the passage as referring to his own ministry and fulfilled in it, Luke 4: 16—21.

He is called pre-eminently the Christ (anointed). He first preached the good tidings (gospel) to the poor. His promises are peculiarly to the broken-hearted; and to the captives taken by the God of this world. He opens the blind eyes, imparting "the true light." He proclaims the acceptable year of the Lord.

The passage is figurative, and should be regarded mainly with reference to a spiritual fulfilment. Yet even in its literal significance it received in the gracious Jesus its most beautiful realization. Who else so carefully sought out the poor and despised, preached to publicans and sinners, opened the eyes of the blind, and loosed the captives "whom Satan had bound?"

[Ch. 63: 1—6.]

In the sixty-second chapter earnest supplication is made to God in behalf of Zion, promise is received of his regard and faithfulness, and the ministers of the Lord are commanded to prepare the way for the advent of Zion's salvation or Saviour. In the sixty-third, this Saviour appears to the prophet in the midst of his contest and victories over the enemies of Israel. He sees him as it were returning from the slaughter of the Edomites (from Bozrah, the chief city of Edom), who stand as a type of the enemies of the church. Startled by the vision, he cries out, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" To this inquiry Messiah answers, in thunder-tones, "I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Again the prophet asks, "Wherefore art thou red in thy apparel, and thine garments like him that treadeth in the winefat?" He replies, "I have trodden the

winepress alone; of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiments. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come." The redemption of the distressed and oppressed church demands this destruction by him of the enemies of God and his kingdom. He comes to the rescue because there is no other Saviour. "I looked and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth."

One realizes, in reading these burning, crushing words from the mouth of the Incarnate, what an apostle meant when he said, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." There is indeed no wrath like the wrath of the Lamb. John, in his Revelations, saw one whose name was "the Word of God," "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood"—"treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

The connection of the passage with what has preceded respecting Messiah, and the representation of his contest as undertaken solely for the rescue of the faithful, mark it as a highly poetical and sublime

description of the Son of God in the moment of that triumph which is so often referred to in other places.

With this vision of triumph for the redeemed, and ruin for the enemies of God, we close the magnificent book of Isaiah. With Isaiah ended the golden age of prophecy. He went down glorious as a sun; and after his setting it was night.

For sixty years after Isaiah's martyrdom no prophet's voice is heard. It is an age of darkness, and fanaticism, and distracting babble: an age of idolatry, and of persecution, in which the few faithful had need of the support afforded by the sublime revelations of preceding ages.

# PERIOD IV.

## CHALDEAN PERIOD.

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THE dark reigns of Manasseh and Ammon came like a Greenland winter upon the theocracy. Seventy years of idolatry, persecution, and spiritual dearth served well-nigh to fill up the cup of wrath which Israel and Judah were to drink from the hand of the Chaldeans.

When the voice of the prophet was again heard it was but the omen of ill and herald of ruin. Zephaniah and Jeremiah saw the shadow of approaching exile already beginning to fall upon their country, and bravely lifted up the note of warning. But the deaf age would not hear; and amain the shadow and the substance strode on.

Yet even in the clutch of Chaldean oppression there came to them visions of hope and voices of promise. He who guards Israel never slumbers, but in the darkest hour renews his divine revelations. Reading these later prophets we feel that though the

age has changed, and the grand prophet-bards of golden memory have departed, yet the Spirit still speaks through appropriate organs. Diversity of gifts, change of style, and the like, none can deny but it is the same spirit.

## ZEPHANIAH.

The better reign of Josiah threw a dam across the stream of corruption, and gave the prophets an opportunity again to speak, and to make addition to the wonderful Book which had been so long buried in the rubbish of the Temple.

Zephaniah first breaks silence with a train of woes and warnings for the wicked nations of the age. To all he proclaims that "the day of the Lord is at hand:" "A day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness," a day of trumpet, and alarm, and distress against those who have sinned against the Lord.

But after this day of darkness comes a cheering prospect of brighter times.

[Ch. 3: 9—20.]

"For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." . . . "The remnant of Israel," who shall trust in the name of the Lord, "shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies;

neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid." . . . "Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee; and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame." . . . "for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth."

We see here an evident allusion to the restoration from the approaching exile; but also a prediction of a brighter era and an illustrious reign of peace of which former prophets have so eloquently spoken.

## JEREMIAH.

Of longer flight and wider sweep is the earnest, pathetic Jeremiah. Beginning about the same time with Zephaniah, 630 B. C., he was called both to predict the downfall of Jerusalem and Judea, and to witness the fulfilment of these predictions. To increase the misery of this tender-hearted and naturally timid child of inspiration, he was not only as it were forced to stand forth as a prophet and rebuke a godless age, but the heartless people whom he warned looked upon him as in some way the author of the divine judgments which he foretold. No one ever had greater occasion for lamentations; and no one ever surpassed him in strains of eloquent sorrow.

The only consolation for this noble mourner was

found in the vision and contemplation of a better future; in the promise of a return from exile, and still more in the distant but joyful reign of "the Lord our righteousness." These two events both lie in the future, the times indistinguishable, but the latter and more distant by reason of its surpassing glory, seeming to cover the whole view.

[Ch. 23: 1—8.]

Jeremiah's first prediction of Christ comes in contrast with the denunciation of wicked leaders who scatter and drive away the flock of the Lord. The evil pastors are the kings through whose wickedness God's people are led into sin and consequent exile and distress. The Lord declares that he will visit upon them the evil of their doings; and "will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord."

That these better shepherds were not the Maccabees, as some have suggested, appears from the fact that they are to be undershepherds of the branch of David, who is to reign, and prosper, and execute judgment. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judg-

ment and justice in the earth. And in his days shall Judah be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is the name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

The Maccabees neither sprang from David nor were undershepherds of any distinguished branch of his family.

The promise of future prosperity here made is too rich to find adequate fulfilment in any kingdom save that of Messiah.

The name given to this branch of David, of whom we have before heard, is sufficient to mark him as the great final Restorer. He who is called pre-eminently our Righteousness, must be more righteous than David, must be divine. And the undershepherds are to be found in such disciples as he to whom Christ said, "feed my sheep."

[Ch. 31 : 31—40.]

The thirtieth and thirty-first chapters are full of promise. The restoration from exile is abundantly predicted; and in connection with this is given a promise of the new covenant, and reign of righteousness. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt . . . But this shall be the covenant

that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

God's covenants are rather dispensations than contracts. This new dispensation is evidently to be general, and to stand in contrast with the Mosaic institutes; to be at least a higher development of theocracy. The peculiarity of this new dispensation is that the law shall be not so much embodied in external forms, as laid up in the heart. It will be a more spiritual dispensation. Some spirituality existed under the old covenant, but "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ;" the peculiarity of the new dispensation is its spirituality.

It shall also be characterized by the general diffusion of religious truth. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Through forgiveness of sins shall men enter into this spiritual covenant, and intimate knowledge of God. Knowledge shall come in part like inspiration by virtue of the love of God's law which men shall possess. Babes and sucklings shall by participation of the spiritual life know more of the mystery of godliness than did ancient kings and prophets. Human teaching shall

be secondary. Symbol and type shall be laid aside, and the pure, simple truth "run and be glorified."

The writer of Hebrews quotes this passage, and declares its fulfilment in the Gospel dispensation. Heb. 8th and 9th. To those chapters the reader is referred for further comment.

The remainder of this thirty-first chapter vividly describes the duration, extension, and glory of the spiritual kingdom, by imagery drawn from the rebuilding and extension of the walls of Jerusalem.

[Ch. 33: 14—26.]

Again, the promise of restoration is made in answer to the complaints of those who declare that the Lord has cast off the regal and sacerdotal families, and given up his people. As in the thirty-first chapter, the promises are declared to be sure and infallible as the ordinances of the sun and moon. Referring back to former promises, he says, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days and at that time, will I cause the branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." . . . "For thus saith the Lord: David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel; neither shall the priests the Levites want a man before me to offer burnt offerings, and to kindle meat offerings, and to do sacrifice continually."

So frequent and strong are the assurances of the royal branch even when the throne of David and the whole theocracy seem to be prostrate and in ruins.

The promise of an eternal priesthood, in connection with the eternal dominion of the branch is a marked feature in this passage. As Christ would establish forever the true kingdom of which David's was a type; so would he also in his sacerdotal character forever afford the means of access to God by his self-sacrifice, and thus virtually perpetuate the Levitical priesthood.

Reference may also be made here to that priesthood, as well as sovereignty, with which every believer is invested. "Ye shall be called kings and priests unto God." In this sense all members of the true church become allied to the families of David and of Levi, and these families are perpetuated in them.

## EZEKIEL.

Leaving now the desolate region of Judea, let us follow the track of the exiles to distant Chaldea. There, too, we may find, by the river Chebar, one whose harp hangs not upon the willows, and whose fiery glance pierces forward into brighter eras. In part at least cotemporary with Jeremiah, probably once his pupil, Ezekiel's circumstances and themes are not unlike that prophet. But in style and treatment of his subject he is all unlike the tender Jere-

miah. He is master of the startling and terrible. At the evils of his age he smites right and left as with a two edged sword. As a spiritual Samson he sets himself to pull down idolatry, and point his people to the true God.

Carried to Chaldea with the better part of the people he has a better material to work upon than has Jeremiah. Still, the exiles to a great extent forgot God and looked for deliverance from human means. At times he also directs his discourse to the remnant of the people in Judea.

Like the other Messianic prophets he follows up denunciation and threatenings with promises of future blessings; coupling together predictions of the restoration and of the great era of Messiah.

A hasty glance at his Messianic predictions must suffice.

[Ch. 11: 14—21.]

Here the Jews yet in Palestine are reproved for exulting over those in captivity as if they were better and more favored of God than the exiles. God promises to be as a sanctuary for the dispersed, and to restore them again to their own land. This promise is accompanied with an intimation of that new birth, which is regarded as more peculiarly a Christian doctrine.

"And I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will

give them an heart of flesh." This and the general scope of the passage seem to embrace more than was realized in the mere restoration to Palestine, though there is no very definite proof of a Messianic reference.

[Ch. 17: 22—24.]

The house of David is here represented as a "high cedar," from which Jehovah takes the topmost branch and plants it "in the mountain of the height of Israel," with the promise that it shall grow, and "bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell."

Similar to the above is Christ's parable of the grain of mustard seed. But Ezekiel sees no seed planted: it is a twig, or highest branch from an ancient stock which grows and spreads till it shelters "all fowl of every wing"—by which is prefigured the ingathering of all nations. Certainly no such gathering of the nations was found under any branch planted in Zion, during the continuance of the old theocracy. This cedar branch must be the branch of which we have already so often heard.

[Ch. 34: 23—31.]

After denouncing the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves and not the flock, and promising to

gather again the scattered flock, Jehovah says, "I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David." A covenant of peace shall be established so that the flock may dwell safely even in the wilderness. "And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown," etc.

There is evident allusion here to that reign of peace and prosperity which is yet only begun, and which shall be fully realized only when the kingdom of Christ shall have filled the world. The good Shepherd is gathering in his flock, and he will feed them, and lead them unto green pastures and living waters.

[Ch. 36: 23—32.]

Here, as in chapter 11, we have a promise of that regeneration which Christ declared to be indispensable for admittance into his kingdom. God will not suffer Israel to receive that entire destruction which they deserve. For his "holy name's sake" he will gather the scattered remnants of his people out of all countries, sprinkle them with clean water and purify them from all their filthiness and idols. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh

And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them."

The gathering from all countries, and the dispensation of the spirit, as well as the change of heart that shall be peculiar to that time, mark the prediction as referring to the Christian dispensation.

[Ch. 37: 21—28.]

Here the prophet is bidden to repeat the promise of the "new covenant" and the "one Shepherd," who is also called "my servant David." Israel and Judah shall be united as one tribe, "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: and they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they and their children, and their children's children forever: and my servant David shall be their prince forever. Moreover, I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore."

Christ, as the descendant of David who would give permanence to his throne, and in whom his family should end, is rightly called David. He has been

also promised as a "covenant for the people." Certainly this shepherd and servant David, this everlasting covenant of peace, and final permanent settlement of Israel and Judah "for evermore," implies more than could have been realized in the comparatively brief and restless period between the restoration and the Roman destruction. Israel and Judah have yet a birth-right in this prediction. David, the shepherd, has introduced the everlasting covenant of peace, and the true Israel shall yet see the complete fulfilment of these promises.

[Ch. 40——48.]

These obscure chapters may be profitably studied in this connection as probably an allegorical description of the Christian church in its final completeness.

The vision of the holy waters, in chapter 47, is certainly a beautiful type of the gradually increasing, life-giving influence of the kingdom of God in the world. Issuing from under the Temple these waters flow away with an ever increasing stream to the sea of death, sweetening even its bitter depths. Upon either bank of the stream "shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruits according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine."

John, in his Revelation 22: 1—3, sees the same

river gushing out from the throne of God in the heavenly city; the trees of life upon its banks still verdant with healing leaves, and bearing their monthly fruit.

The visions of Ezekel and of John still await their complete fulfilment. The city, the Temple, and the immortal river still gleam in the eye of faith.

## DANIEL.

The period now under review closes with Daniel, that noble cotemporary of Ezekiel, most favored by fortune of all the prophets.

Carried to Babylon when a child, he grew up and lived in exile, a favorite of the Chaldeans. Favored also of heaven above most men he preserved his attachment to his religion and his fidelity to his God, who proved to him a friend indeed.

He was peculiarly the prophet of the exile, living through it, and finishing his ministry after the decree of Cyrus for the restoration.

The accuracy with which he predicted the time of Messiah's advent, though proof of his clear prophetic vision, has subjected him to the fierce attacks of the later Jews and other sceptics who are unwilling to find his predictions fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The older Jews, Josephus among them, regarded him as one of the greatest of the prophets. But since his claim to such regard has been substantiated by the fulfilment of his predictions, they have sought to

detract from him, and class him among the later and uninspired writers.

Christ confirms his prophetic inspiration in Matt. 24: 15, Mark 13: 14. "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet," etc. And even without this divine testimony, his inspiration is indisputable.

Daniel's visions are on a collossal scale. His dreams cover kingdoms and dynasties. If he takes note of time, it is in days and weeks of years that he measures it.

It has been truly remarked that visions of Messiah interpenetrate the whole book of Daniel. But at present we shall notice only three or four different visions as undoubtedly Messianic.

[Ch. 2: 31—45.]

The first of these is found in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and its interpretation. The troubled king demands that his wise men reveal and interpret to him his forgotten dream. The magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers fail. But the God of heaven in a vision reveals to Daniel the dream and its intepretation. "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. The image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs (sides) of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron

and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream."

According to the interpretation revealed to Daniel, the different parts of the image represent so many different kings or kingdoms. After the overthrow of these four great kingdoms, say the Chaldean, Persian, Macedonian, and Roman, which shall be broken to pieces and ground to powder by "the stone cut out of the mountain without hands," this stone shall itself become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. That is, "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter."

The aptness of this image as a type of the four

kingdoms spoken of above, and their overthrow by the kingdom of righteousness set up by the God of heaven in the person of Christ, forbid that any Christian should doubt the ancient Jewish interpretation which regarded the stone that becomes a mountain and fills the world as the anointed branch of David. Or taking it as a type of Christ's kingdom, rather than of his person, how aptly does the increasing stone describe the progressive course of Christianity, which seems to be now crushing "the toes of clay and iron" and fast filling the world.

[Ch. 7: 13, 14.]

In another dream Daniel sees four beasts representing the same kingdoms as the different parts of "the image" represented above. Their dominion is broken by the "Ancient of days," and dominion is given to the "Son of man."

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man (intimating his humanity) came with the clouds of heaven (intimating his divinity), and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

This were a strange vision to apply to any temporal and merely human ruler. What king of earth,

robed in clouds, goes to the Ancient of days and receives from him eternal, unlimited dominion? Only that "Son of man," whose "kingdom is not of this world," can realize this vision."

The latter part of the chapter indicates the manner in which the saints of the Most High shall, as the organs of this regal Son of man, obtain victory over the world and participate in his everlasting dominion.

"These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever." The little horn of the fourth beast "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." . . . "And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." "Blessed are the meek," said Christ, "for they shall inherit the earth." And again, of himself he says, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." If further confirmation of the Messianic character of this vision is needed, let Eph. 1: 18—23 be studied; "That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches

of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

[Ch. 9: 24—27.]

In the sixty-ninth year of the captivity and the five hundred and thirty-eighth B. C., Daniel, in studying the writings of Jeremiah, becomes impressed with the truth that the Chaldean bondage was to last but 70 years; and hence that it was near its end. Encouraged by this he prays fervently to God to remember and deliver his people. In answer to his prayer, Gabriel addresses him in vision, assuring him that deliverance is at hand. With this assurance is given one of the most striking predictions of that greater salvation, of which deliverance from Chaldean bondage is but a type.

As a great variety of translations and interpretations have been proposed for this remarkable prediction, and as the interpretation depends mainly upon

the translation adopted, it may be well to insert here one of the best of recent translations, that of Stuart in his commentary on Daniel:

"Seventy weeks are decided respecting thy people and thy holy city to restrain transgression, and to seal up sin, and to expiate iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal a vision and prophecy, and to anoint a Holy of holies.

"Mark well and understand; from the going forth of a command to rebuild Jerusalem unto an Anointed one, a prince, shall be seven weeks—and sixty and two weeks shall it be rebuilt, with broad spaces and narrow limits and in troublous times. And after sixty and two weeks an Anointed one shall be cut off, and there shall be none for it (the people), and the city and the sanctuary shall the people of a prince that will come destroy: but his end shall be with an overwhelming flood and unto the end shall be war, a decreed measure of desolations. And he shall firmly covenant with many for one week; and during half of the week shall he cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease; and a master shall be over a winged fowl of abomination; but unto destruction, even that which is decreed, shall there be an outpouring upon him who is to be destroyed."

The above translation is introduced here partly because its author does *not* adopt the exclusively Messianic interpretation, and hence cannot be prejudiced in favor of our present purpose.

Whatever translation be adopted the general impression made upon the reader is the same. No unprejudiced mind can fail to see here a remarkable prediction of the time that is to intervene between the Babylonish captivity and the introduction of a new dispensation by Messiah.

The first question that arises upon the reading of this passage respects the weeks mentioned. For the following, among other reasons, nearly all interpreters regard the weeks spoken of as periods each of seven years.

It is intimated that the seventy weeks are to be in some sense a compensation for the seventy years exile. But seventy common weeks of prosperity would be no consideration for seventy years of suffering. Moreover, the great events that are to occur within the specified period demand that it be much more than seventy ordinary weeks. Again, the captivity of seventy years evidently had reference to the sabbatic years, or seven-year weeks of the Hebrews. Hence, in the specification of a period by weeks, we should naturally expect a reference to those weeks of years which had figured so largely in Hebrew history. Seven, seventy and seven times seventy were sacred numbers, and the latter, seven times seventy years, the period supposed to be designated in this prediction, completed the great cycle at the end of which debts were cancelled, slaves emancipated and forfeited lands restored to the original proprietors. In

other words seventy weeks of seven years each brought about the great jubilee.

At the close of the seventy weeks, in the passage before us, shall come the finishing of transgression, the atonement for sins, the introduction of a new dispensation, the fulfilment of prophecy, and the anointing of the Most Holy. What jubilee were great in comparison with such an epoch?

The next question of time respects the beginning and close of the seventy weeks.

Respecting this there has been, and perhaps ever will be, diversity of opinion. Some have fixed upon the edict of Cyrus for the restoration of the Jews, others upon that of Darius; most fix upon the first decree of Artaxerxes in his seventh year, and some upon his second decree and its fulfilment by Nehemiah in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes' reign. Others declare that insuperable objections lie against each of these points of time, and leave us in entire suspense relative to the starting point.

Generally, the calculator starts at the other end, the supposed termination of the seventy weeks, and reckons backwards to find the beginning. But here also arises a difficulty. Some interpreters refer the appearance of Messiah to his birth, others to his baptism and entrance upon his public ministry, while others still deny that any definite allusion is made to either event. Differences also arise in the computation from the use of solar time by one, and lunar by

another. It is, moreover, disputed whether the sacrifice and oblation ceased when the great sacrifice of Christ was offered, or whether it was when the abomination of desolation was erected by the Romans, or whether the reference is not to the suppression of the temple service by Antiochus, and the erection of the statue of Jupiter Olympus upon the altar of the Temple. The winged fowl of abomination in Stuart's translation is of course, in that case, the eagle, bird of Jupiter.

Lastly, interpreters differ respecting the Messiah or anointed one, who is to be cut off after three score and two weeks; some claiming that this person is the same as the Prince Messiah, others that it was the priest Onias.

Such are the difficulties and disagreements respecting this prophecy. The present writer has no desire to conceal them, and no design to increase them by proposing new theories. But let not the reader surmise that the prediction is, therefore, unintelligible and useless for our purpose. Obscure as it is, it throws more prophetic light upon the time of the advent than any other prediction. Both Jews and Christians, with the exception of those who are determined not to admit a clear prediction of Jesus Christ, have ever found here specification of the time of Messiah's advent.

It is agreed by all believers in Messianic prophecy, that the seventy weeks were weeks of years.

That the Most Holy or Holy of holies refers to the new temple or spiritual dispensation of Messiah. That "the Messiah the Prince" is Emmanuel, and that it is here predicted that he should appear about four hundred and ninety years after the captivity. Upon this the Jews in and before the days of Christ founded their calculations.

As to the difficulty attending the determination of the precise time spoken of, it may be remarked that it probably was not God's purpose clearly and definitely to reveal the time. He ever left room for study and faith. And despite all the obscurity and disagreement attending the interpretation, interpreters have never been able to get far enough apart to affect materially the value of this passage. Their calculations all bring out the last of the seventy weeks somewhere between the birth of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The difference is a mere trifle. Each calculator manages to find plausible arguments and coincidences for his reckoning; and since they all point to the age of Jesus as about the time foretold by Daniel for the advent of the Messiah the Prince, we need not quarrel over the slight disagreements.

The fact that the Jews have felt compelled either to admit the fulfilment of this prediction in Christ, or to renounce the authority and deny the inspiration of Daniel, and have chosen the latter alternative, shows that the discrepancies between different calculators

are of slight consequence, and that the difficulty is not in the prediction, but in our partial knowledge of the facts in the fulfilment.

As a sample of the calculations based on this prediction an abstract of Hengstenberg's is subjoined:

"Notwithstanding the former decrees and the efforts of the Jews to rebuild their city, the 'troublous times' retarded them so that in fact Jerusalem was not rebuilt until the time of Artaxerxes' second decree in the twentieth year of his reign. This twentieth of Artaxerxes was the four hundred and fifty-fifth B. C. Seven weeks and three score and two weeks, or sixty-nine weeks from this decree, i. e. four hundred and eighty-three years, bring us to the time of Christ's baptism and entry upon his public ministry. Add one week or seven years to 483 = 490. This one week, in which the 'covenant was to be confirmed with many,' and in the midst of which 'the sacrifice and oblation should cease,' embraces the public ministry of Christ, three and a half years, and leaves three and a half years 'to confirm the covenant' by the preaching of the apostles and the dispensation of the spirit."

In conclusion, let the reader note the name here given to the promised Prince. It is not an anointed simply in a qualified sense, as Cyrus is in one place called God's anointed. It is *the Messiah the Prince* —one who can restrain transgression, seal up sin, expiate iniquity, bring in everlasting righteousness,

seal vision and prophecy, and anoint a Holy of holies: achievements which are altogether above the capacity of mortal. Such an one shall appear about 490 years after the decree to restore and to build Jerusalem. Such a specification of numbers is rare in prophecy; though there are other cases, e. g. Jeremiah's prediction that the captivity should last seventy years. Jer. 25 : 11, and 29 : 10.

Chapter 12 is worthy of study in this connection, although its Messianic reference is not so clear as the above. "Michael, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people," shall stand up in a time of trouble; "and at that time thy people shall be delivered every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise (teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever."

Here the prophet receives an intimation of the final resurrection, judgment, and eternal retribution: and the connection, as well as the name and office, suggests the probability that this Michael is no created angel, but that covenant Angel into whose hands "the Father hath committed all judgment."

Thus did this great prophet overlook the long ages of earth, and see in vision the final consummation of the mediatorial work. Happy is he who, like

Daniel, at the close of his earthly commission, can hear the voice of his Lord saying, "Go thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

So closes the Chaldean period of prophecy. The captive exile no longer sits weeping by the rivers of Babylon. Westward again wends the star of prophecy, now a waning star.

# PERIOD V.

## PERIOD OF THE RESTORATION.

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About Jerusalem now gather returning Jews to build again their temple and city. They find desolation and discouragement. Their numbers and resources are limited. Enemies oppose and harrass them. Their best endeavors fall so far below their ideal that they become discouraged and disheartened. Some are also reckless and indifferent. Occupied with their own personal interests, eager to make a good settlement, they forget their obligations to Him who had restored them to their beloved land, and refuse to build upon his temple. These are hard and troublous times, and the work goes slowly and sadly on.

At this juncture of affairs arises a little constellation of prophets to encourage and urge on the rebuilding of the city and temple, and, as the event proved, to close the book of prophecy.

The captivity cured the Jews of all tendency to pagan idolatry. Let them be once more fairly reinstated in their country, and get their religious institu-

tions well established, and it may be presumed that, even without the continued ministration of inspired prophets, they would, at least, for four or five centuries, maintain the true religion. These last prophets and their coadjutors make provision for such a state of things by urging on the reconstruction of the Temple, re-establishing the ancient worship of God, building synagogues, and multiplying copies of the Law and the Prophets; and by pointing the people still forward to a brighter era and a greater leader. Had the book of prophecy closed with the exile, the tendency would have been to seek the fulfilment of Messianic prophecy in Cyrus, Zerubbabel, and others who figured prominently in the restoration. To prevent this, inspired seers still point to the future; and the last of this noble order closes his commission with a prediction of a prophetic messenger yet to arise as the herald of Messiah.

## HAGGAI.

Haggai leads the way in this new era as the helper of Zerubbabel the governor, and of Joshua the high priest. Upon the subject of our present studies he throws but a single flash of light; in that, however, there is much of promise. The occasion of his message is the grief of the people on account of the inferiority of the new temple which they are building in contrast with the old temple which some of them had seen in its glory. To console them he

is commissioned to predict something of the glory that shall yet crown this temple which now seems as nothing in their eyes.

[Ch. 2 : 6—9.]

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts: yet once it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. . . . The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." From Heb. 12: 26, 27, we learn that this shaking of the nations, the earth, and the heavens, "signifies the removing" of the old dispensation with whatever else may be shaken, and the introduction of the kingdom of Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, a kingdom which cannot be moved. According to this interpreter the establishment of Christianity is a far more trying and sifting process than was the giving of the law. The earth shook when God came down on Sinai. The universe shakes when Christ comes down to build his kingdom. The Gospel tries everything, shakes everything, and shakes down whatever is not stable and divine. And when idolatries and tyrannies shall have fallen, the regenerated nations shall come to the new temple, bringing their desire (objects of desire, treasures) to

beautify and render glorious that house where the Lord himself will dispense peace.

The ninth or last verse of this prediction has been generally regarded as a promise that Christ would appear before the destruction of this second temple and glorify it by his presence, as he did. And as his presence was greater than the shekinah or aught else that pertained to the old temple, "the glory of this latter house" was, in this respect, "greater than of the former."

The prediction may be regarded as yet but partially fulfilled. There is now a shaking among the nations, and the desire of the heathen is coming; the "shaking," the "glory," and the "peace" shall yet be greater.

## ZECHARIAH.

Haggai was but the herald of a brighter star who joined him in the same work of encouraging a desponding people, reproving the selfish and idle, and urging on the rebuilding of city and temple. In spiritual things Zechariah was the master builder of this era. Amid his rebukes, warnings, and encouragements he mingles freely predictions of that Messiah who is to appear in due time to glorify Zion, and receive into his kingdom all the pure and devout. Excepting Isaiah, no other prophet has such definite and marked delineations of the Messiah and his mediatorial work. Zechariah gives striking intimations

of Christ's participation in the divine nature, of his uniting in himself the regal and the sacerdotal offices, of his triumphal entry into Jerusalem upon an ass, of his betrayal for thirty pieces of silver, his death, the unbelief of the Jews, and of their final repentance and restoration.

In many of his Messianic predictions there is, doubtless, a lower reference to Joshua and Zerubbabel as types of Christ to whom the predictions mainly refer.

The first and second chapters of this book are generally regarded as containing allusions to Christ and the new dispensation. But as there is no clearly defined feature of this kind they may be passed over with the remark that the "rider on the red horse" may be, and the "man with the measuring line" doubtless is, the angel of the Lord, or covenant angel of Israel, who is to enlarge and beautify Jerusalem and make it the seat of his dominion.

[Ch. 3: 8—10.]

"Behold, I will bring forth my servant the Branch." Here is a renewal of the promise made through Isaiah 200 years before; Is. 11: 1. The branch is so often spoken of, in connection with the prospects of the theocracy, that we cannot easily doubt to whom it refers. It is significant here as showing that "the Branch" was some one yet to come, and hence not Zerubbabel or any one of those

who figured in the restoration from Babylon. They had come and acted or were then acting their part. But this servant of God and branch of Jesse were yet to come for a future restoration.

"For, behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes: behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of the land in one day."

The prostrate theocracy is likened to a rough stone, upon which the attentive providence of God is directed as with seven eyes; and when the Branch appears he will polish and grave it, removing its iniquity in one day.

Then shall follow the longed for era of peace when "every man shall call (invite) his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree, saith the Lord of hosts."

[Ch. 4.]

A golden candlestick miraculously supplied with oil, as a type of Zerubbabel sustained and carried forward in his difficult enterprise, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit saith the Lord," seems also, as does Zerubbabel himself, to be a type of that greater builder before whom every "great mountain shall become a plain;" and who shall bring forth "the headstone" of his spiritual temple "with shoutings of grace, grace unto it."

[Ch. 6: 9—15.]

Here is a symbolical transaction in which the prophet is bidden to crown Joshua the high priest with two crowns. One of these crowns may be regarded as representing the sacerdotal office, and the other the regal. Having thus doubly crowned Joshua, he bids the people look upon him as a type of the man whose name is the BRANCH: and "he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord: even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne, and he shall be a priest upon his throne (i. e. unite the regal and priestly offices); and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." As both king and priest, Melchisedec-like, he shall be Prince of peace.

Certainly it is not the material temple that this Branch is to build. Zerubbabel was already building that, but he was not a priest, and hence could not be the Branch. Joshua was priest but not king, nor was he the main builder of the temple.

"And they that are far off shall come and build in the temple of the Lord." It cannot be doubtful who is this royal priest who is to gather and build the far off nations into his living temple.

[Ch. 8.]

In this chapter the disconsolate portion of the people are assured that such great prosperity and

blessings are in store for Israel, that all their days of mourning shall be changed into days of rejoicing. The richness of the promises, particularly in the closing verses, indicates a reference to the future blessedness of the theocracy under the reign of Christ.

"Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages and nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you."

[Ch. 9: 9, 10.]

Zion, saved from the common ruin of other cities, is here called upon to rejoice in the approach of her great, though lowly, king of righteousness and salvation. The cause of joy is no ordinary one.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy king cometh unto thee, he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon the colt the foal of an ass."

Before the introduction of horses by Solomon, asses were sometimes ridden by kings, but not after that time. Hence, this was unquestionably significant of the humility of the Messiah. David, Solo-

mon, and their successors often entered Jerusalem upon richly caparisoned mules and horses, attended by brilliant retinues. Christ, as if in ridicule of all the mock-splendors of earthly kingship, and in contempt of the Jewish notion of a worldly Messiah, when the popular zeal in his favor had reached its climax, gave this prediction its accurate and literal fulfilment. With the loose coats of his followers, instead of the costly trappings, spread upon an ungainly ass colt, attended by a vociferating train of those whom his enemies regarded as the rabble, Zion's greatest king entered the proud city of David amid shouts of rejoicing. Matt. 21 : 1—10.

Verse 10 carries out the subject, depicting his reign as universal and peaceful. "He shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth." The highest dignity and universal dominion await the lowly-minded king.

It may be added respecting this prediction, that although the humiliation indicated was repugnant to Jewish pride, the Messianic interpretation prevailed until the fulfilment of the passage by Christ became notorious. After that, every device was resorted to by the Jews to wrest the passage from the Christians. The Neologists alone of the professedly Christian church have imitated these devices of the Jews. But their general disagreement relative to the disposal of

the passage affords a sufficient refutation of their arguments. The sanction of the Evangelists, parallel passages respecting the character of the Messiah, the accordance of the representation here made with the spirit of the Prince of peace, and the interpretation of the ancients, all combine to stamp the passage as Messianic.

[Ch. 11: 12, 13.]

In a symbolical transaction carried on between the prophet and the people, Israel is here represented as a flock destined for the slaughter. The Lord, or the prophet, as his type and representative, assumes the pastoral office in their behalf, and attempts their deliverance. But their unbelief and faithlessness compel him to give them up. As he is about to withdraw from them he asks, as one worthy of his hire, for the reward of his services. "If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear." Instead, however, of an appropriate recompense, instead of that gratitude and affection which the good shepherd had merited, they meanly tender him the common price of a slave. "So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver." Insulted and grieved by this base return he flings down the coin in the temple, calling it, ironically, "the *goodly price*" that he was prized at of them. "And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of

silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord."

Here is an evident picture of some definite transaction between God and his people. The question is, who was this shepherd, and what event in Jewish history was the fulfilment of this prediction?

It is natural to regard this shepherd as the same who is elsewhere so often represented as the guardian of Israel.

The breaking of the first staff, Beauty (grace), evidently denotes the dissolution of God's covenant, and the withdrawal of his protection from Judah and Israel. This event could not have been realized in or near the time of the prophet: Jehovah was then just resuming the peculiar care of his flock. Nor does the character ascribed to the people befit that age: they were for the most part piously disposed at that time, and were united together, peacefully and promisingly making settlement in the land from which they had been exiled. This by no means accords with the breaking of the second staff, Bands (brotherly love, concord); by which is signified the introduction of internal discord and division.

Hence we are compelled to seek the realization of this symbolical transaction in the later history of the Jewish people.

That by the "thirty pieces of silver" is indicated the disesteem and insult of the people, and not, as some have suggested, the faith of an acceptable few,

is evident from the contempt with which they are received and treated, and from the fact that the reward was not asked until the shepherd had determined to leave them. The ignominious use to which the money is applied proves that it was no acceptable offering. It is cast down in the temple because that was the council-house of the nation, the place where important public business was transacted. But it is thrown down not for sacred or honorable use, but for the potter; perhaps a potter who made wares for the temple-service; or it is to be transferred to the potter or potter's field, which was an unclean place, in the valley of Hinnom.

To understand aright this allusion to the potter, we must go back to Jeremiah, ch. 7: 32—34, and ch. 19. Amongst the worst of Judah's sins was the idolatry practised in the valley of the son of Hinnom or Tophet.

Jeremiah was directed to take the elders of the priests and of the people with him into this valley, to procure a bottle from the potter's house and break it before them in the valley, at the same time prophesying, and saying, "Thus will God break this people and this city as one breaketh a potter's vessel that cannot be made whole again; and they shall bury in Tophet till there be (because there shall be) no place else to bury."

Tophet shall be henceforth an unclean place; and hence a fit place to cast, or expend, that which is

unclean. And the potter and the potter's field are in this place.

Turn now to the record found in Matt. 26: 14, 15, respecting Jesus, who styled himself the good "Shepherd;" and respecting "thirty pieces of silver," and "the potter." "Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." This was near the close of Christ's public ministry. And this was the bribe or price offered for the delivery of Christ into the hands of the Sanhedrim. This was the "goodly price" at which they prized him.

After his delivery and condemnation, continues the account, Matt. 27: 3—10, "Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders. And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood. And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy, the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that

was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me."

This event occurred about the time that the covenant with the Hebrews, as a peculiar people, was dissolved; that "the staff Beauty" was broken. Henceforth they were given up to discord and division and finally to slaughter and dispersion. They compelled the shepherd to abandon them.

No one supposes that Judas and the Sanhedrim had any thought of fulfilling this prediction of Jeremy and Zechariah, in their transactions; yet they valued him at thirty silverlings. The contemptible price was cast back into the temple for the potter, that so Tophet might henceforth be the burial place of those for whose burial there was "no place else."

Who can fail to see that they here acted unconsciously as the guilty instruments of fulfilling prophecy? Providence made their wrath confirm his predictions.

One remark relative to Matthew's assignment of the whole prediction to Jeremiah.

Either transcribers have, by mistake, written Jeremiah instead of Zechariah (see Barnes on Matt. 27: 9), or Matthew regarded the event predicted by Zechariah and fulfilled by Judas and the priests as but the completion and full realization of that which Jeremiah more indefinitely foretold. Either explana-

tion accounts for the seeming discrepancy. It is favorable to the latter interpretation, that where two prophets have alluded to the same thing, New Testament writers alluding to it generally name but one, and generally, as in this case, the elder of the prophets.

[Ch. 12 : 6—14.]

In contrast with the wickedness of the people, God's renunciation of them, and the consequent evils, foretold above, we have here a prediction of their repentance and return to God. The contrast indicates a great, general restoration of the Jews to the favor of God, the "house of David" and the inhabitants of Jerusalem representing the theocracy.

The time referred to shall be that of the peculiar dispensation of the Spirit. "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born," etc.

As Jehovah is the speaker in this passage, and says, "They shall look upon *me* whom they have pierced," etc., the divinity of the person concerned is plainly implied; it is the same one who is to pour out the spirit of grace and of supplication.

The piercing might be figurative, and refer in

general to all the ingratitude and cruelty attending the rejection of a proffered Saviour; but a striking fulfilment narrated in John 19: 34—37, compels us to take the prediction in its literal sense.

It is said that while Christ hung upon the cross, "One of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side," in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

The soldier acted as the executor of the will of the people; virtually they pierced him.

The "mourning" foretold by the prophet began even on the day of the piercing. "All the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned," Luke 23: 48. Convinced by the miracles attending his death, some even then began to mourn that they had pierced him; others of those who clamored for his crucifixion were probably afterwards led to repentance at the time of the Pentecost, when the "spirit of grace and of supplication" was so abundantly poured upon the people. But these cases were only a pledge of that which was to be exhibited by the nation generally, and by all others who cherish the spirit of the murderers of Christ, and thus become their accomplices. Christ's blood rests upon all rejectors, and by their sins all have pierced him. When brought by the "Spirit of grace" to look upon him in his true character they must mourn. The Revelator tells us that a time is coming when "every eye shall see

him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."

[Ch. 13.]

The repentance spoken of above shall not be in vain, where it is true repentance and not mere remorse. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness."

The connection of these three chapters shows that each refers to the same people and the same Shepherd; that the fountain of salvation is in the side of him that was pierced. The figure of a purifying fountain is so often used to express the efficacy of Christ's blood that particular references are not needed.

Verses 7—9 may be received as the summing up of all that has been said respecting the Saviour in the 11th, 12th, and 13th chapters.

Jehovah himself here calls for the victim that shall atone for sin. "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."

This shepherd is evidently the one referred to in chapter 11. He is called the man that is God's fellow; if "man," he possesses the human nature; if God's "fellow," as this word denotes a close

blood-relationship, he must participate in, be intimately united to, the divine nature.

Christ applies the passage to himself on that night of agony preceding his crucifixion; Matt. 26: 31. "All ye (the disciples) shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad."

He seemed also to hear Jehovah calling upon the sword to awake against him. Hence, he says to his condemner, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

"God *gave* his only begotten Son," his fellow, to die for sinners. And he gave himself; while the Jews and Romans were the sword in the Almighty's hand.

But what of the scattered flock? "Two parts," saith the Lord, "shall be cut off and die, but the third part shall be left. And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: and they shall call on my name and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

The application to the immediate circle of Christ's disciples did not exclude the general application of the passage to the Jewish people. That flock still wanders. Many have been cut off, more shall be; but a remnant shall be saved.

The next and last chapter of Zechariah contains an unmistakeable reference to Messianic times. "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD" has not yet been inscribed upon "the bells of the horses and upon every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah." The allusion is general and indefinite, and need not detain us. But with the promise of such a time sets the brightest star of this prophetic period.

## MALACHI.

It remains for us to examine the "seal of prophecy." Little is known respecting Malachi, except what he has himself told us. Probably he was divinely commissioned to labor, in connection with Nehemiah, from about the year 430 to 424 B. C.

His immediate aim was to reprove and correct abuses and corruptions existing chiefly amongst the priesthood. Surrounded by enemies, and deficient in enterprise and devotion, the people did not prosper. Although the temple had been completed, the city still to a great extent lay waste. The nation, instead of being penitent, and humble, and trusting in God, were disposed to complain and justify themselves, claiming the blessings promised by former prophets as their rightful due. Malachi seeks to expose this wickedness and to lead them to repentance, humility, and entire consecration to God.

[Ch. 3: 1—3.]

They wearied the Lord, saying, "Where is the God of judgment?" To this the prophet replies, assuring the murmurers that the righteousness of God shall in due time appear.

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Here two messengers are spoken of, of whom one is to prepare the way for the other. The reference is evidently to the herald foretold in Isaiah 40: 35, who should cry in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." That an earthly or merely human messenger is meant appears from the contrast between him and the "messenger (angel) of the covenant," who is called "the Lord." The first messenger is, in chapter fourth, called Elias. John, the Baptist, alone realized the idea of this messenger. Standing aloof from the exciting questions of his age, he alone, unlike the old prophets, aimed simply to prepare the way, and introduce the Messiah.

The "Lord whom ye seek," the covenant angel, who is to follow the herald, and by punishing the wicked and trying the righteous, sift, refine, and purify the theocracy, can be no other than the Christ. Both his name and office indicate his rank.

[Ch. 4.]

The refining process shall be severe. It shall burn up, as stubble, all that do wickedly. But after the night and fire of their trial is over, "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." He, who is to the wicked a consuming fire, is to the righteous a life-giving sun.

Then follows another promise of the herald who shall give warning of the great advent. "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

Elijah was, in a sense, the father of the prophets. He also fell upon evil times, and his rejection was followed by severe judgments. As the herald of Messiah is to appear under like circumstances, he is figuratively called Elijah. Many of the Jews, in accordance with their carnal mode of interpretation, supposed that the real Elijah was to be raised, and to reappear before Messiah's advent. But Christ declared to his hearers, upon one occasion, that "Elias had already come," in the person of John the Baptist.

With this promise of the prophetic reformer and messenger to precede the advent of "the Lord whom we seek," closes the book of prophecy. Henceforth the oracles are dumb. The veil comes down over the dim form of Malachi, and no other eye penetrates the four dark centuries that lie between him and Elias.

We have followed through the Hebrew Book the dim though continuous traces of a divine Ideal of God incarnate.

This ideal of the Hebrews is too high to be of human birth. What variety of faculties and functions, what sublimity, what scope and intensity of power are ascribed to this Immanuel! He is a priest, a prophet, a king—a shepherd, a leader, an avenger—a man, an angel, a God; at once angel of the Lord and God-man—branch of Jesse, Son of God, Messiah, Immanuel!

For the advent of such a personage the world may well wait and look with anxiety. The promise is clear that he shall open up a fountain for sin and uncleanness, that he shall bear our sins, and subdue our enemies, that he shall triumph over all evil and found an eternal, universal kingdom of righteousness and peace. Such promises miraculously sent down from heaven are deposited in the archives of Israel, to work through the Hebrew mass, and thence through larger masses, until the world be ready to receive the last dispensation.

Our line of light, starting from Eden, has thus far brightened. We see it still stretching on into the silent centuries, shining and brightening until it centers and burns in the Star of Bethlehem.

# SECOND PART.

# LIFE OF CHRIST.

# INTRODUCTION.

THE fundamental idea of the God-man is the combination of the divine and human natures, the incarnation of Deity. Precisely how God would exhibit himself in this union with our race we could not anticipate. But we should expect that the whole manifestation would be a mingling of the natural and the supernatural. The compound life would be harmonious, would have a unity peculiar to itself; and yet in its manifestations we should see the blended tints of humanity and Deity in combinations, to us indivisible and inexplicable.

As an important object of the incarnation is to present the ideal of human character and life, to give man a pattern of that perfection for which he is to strive; we should expect that in his birth, his life and his death, the God-man would exhibit an intimate union to, and sympathy with, mankind and the natural processes of human life. If he is to be the ideal universal man, he will be born, will live and die as do other men. He will become partaker of our joys

and sorrows, our pains and pleasures. He will act the whole drama of human life as it should be acted, otherwise he could not be our pattern, nor teach us how God would in all cases have us act.

And yet his divinity must not be wholly submerged and obscured in the human element. Through all his manifestation the divine must appear and irradiate the human.

His *birth* will not be simply a natural generation; there must be something like a new creation in it. A new type of existence is to be originated. A supernatural element must here appear. His *life* will not be wholly human. The supernatural will also ever and anon gleam out and dazzle the beholder. Under its human disguise it may shine with subdued and softened lustre, but it must prove itself divine. His life will be the life of God, though incarnated.

His *exit* from our world will also be in part natural, in part supernatural. He will teach us how to die, will learn to sympathize with us in the last dreaded agony. And yet he must not leave the world just as would a mere man. The life that begins and proceeds in a miracle must end in a miracle. The supernatural will appear in his demise.

The first requisite, therefore, of the God-man is, that he present a new exhibition of the divine and human lives combined, that his whole manifestation be natural and also supernatural.

In his intellect he will exhibit the natural facul-

ties intensified and ennobled by the divine wisdom that shall be poured through them. His mind will seem to be a human mind, and yet more than human. We shall expect to see every faculty fully developed, and the whole intellect well balanced and harmonized; and we shall also expect such high and original thoughts as no mortal could attain. The infinite wisdom will speak through him. He will certainly clear up some of the dark problems, and illuminate some of the mysteries that hang about our world. He will tell of life and immortality.

As to his *moral* character, we shall, of course, expect perfection. His life must be holy, without spot. What we mainly look for in him is the restoration of moral purity. He will teach us what is that harmony with God and the eternal laws which our race long since lost; he will show us a sinless character and life. In his presence we shall feel that the Holy One is before us. Passing through all the temptations to which we are subject he will maintain his integrity and remain unsullied. He will produce a character and life completely in harmony with the eternal ideal.

His life will realize the original idea of humanity, exalted, purified, glorified by free communion and organic connection with Godhood.

What works precisely the God-man would perform we could not predetermine; but we should expect such as would testify satisfactorily to his divine com-

mission. If he be God, he will exhibit the power of God—a power adequate to creation, adequate to anything. We may expect a sign of his supremacy to the usual order and laws of nature. Miracles may, therefore, be expected to form a part of his manifestation. His incarnation will be, indeed, itself the highest miracle. And if that be once admitted no other miracle, however stupendous, need seem incredible. If the Almighty enter into the human form, he will be Almighty still, and nature will be his creature no less than before. For any sufficient moral end he will not hesitate to turn her as he pleases, though her entire economy should be subverted. He who launched the worlds, and who guides them in their circles, may turn them "at his own sweet will." If to create and work the universe be the free exercise and pastime of Deity, we need not wonder to see him treat lightly what seems to us a fixed principle or law. What were gravity, or elective affinity, or any law of matter or of mind, of life or of death, to Him by whom all things subsist? Miracles the God-man will surely perform, if there be any reason for them. And we may anticipate that they would be a fit testimony of his power. Nothing else would so readily and forcibly command the attention and convince the minds of wonder-loving men.

We shall also look for a new dispensation of truth from his lips. He will be a Seer, Revealer of super-

human wisdom. New doctrines of God, of the soul, and of human destiny he may bring with him. A prime object of his mission will be to reveal God to us. He will be the "truth and the light." Doubtless he will speak "as never man spake." His advent will mark a new era in human knowledge, particularly the knowledge of divine things. He will be the great prophet of mankind; the ideal and head of the race of prophets. Whatever high and divine revelations may be necessary for the faith of mankind he will proclaim. He will bring a Gospel, the like of which had not been before.

He will also mark a new era in the spiritual history of the world: will introduce a new religious life. He will establish a faith that shall be *the faith* of humanity, in its better forms, for all time.

We have had intimation that he will be both priest and prophet for our world. Regal dignity is also assigned to him; he will, therefore, be a great reformer. Old Testaments, types, institutions, ordinances, and kingdoms, shall be superseded by him: he will make all things new. Time shall take its date from his advent, as the second creation. Temples, priesthoods, thrones, and hierarchies shall crumble before him, and in his footsteps shall spring the germs of new eras.

Such things we shall look for in Emmanuel. We cannot accept a pretender who does not exhibit most of these characteristics.

But the ideal is so high that if one shall realize it, Him we must accept. The mark is evidently set above man's utmost stretch. Divinity alone can reach it.

The question sometimes occurs, why, if Christ were the God-man, on whom the world's salvation depends, did he not appear sooner? Or why just at the time when he did?

We might be content to leave such questions unanswered. God knows his own times of action, and he who has not confidence in the divine appointments may always question. Why did not God create and people our earth sooner? or why do this just when he did?

Still, we may often trace plan and propriety in the divine appointments; we may in this.

Several things were evidently desirable before the advent of the divine man.

As he was to come mainly to redeem from sin, and to restore man to holiness, it was needful that man should have indisputable experience of the need of a divine Redeemer.

We find, even now, those who deny the need of such a manifestation of the divine life to our race. Much more would they have denied it if the world had not first gone through its sad experience.

*The falsehood and evil of Atheism was to be first demonstrated in human history.*

The great demonstration of the wickedness and

the debasing tendency of pure Atheism was made before the deluge. Man had certainly some knowledge of a God at first; and that knowledge was preserved. But the number of theists before the deluge was small: only one family seem to have had any real faith during the last century of the antedeluvian period. That was the golden era of Atheism; and the deluge was its harvest.

With all the vigor of a youthful race, naturally in its prime, and with a new, teeming world whose virgin soil was yet untaxed, the antedeluvians enacted, in their swift, downward march, the history of a race without God and religion.

The deluge was God's great argument against Atheism; and it settled the question. Since that time has been idolatry, but not general Atheism. Pretended Atheism has now and then arisen, but it ever belies its profession. Real Atheism does not exist and has not existed, in any great extent, since the deluge; and it cannot evermore.

The impossibility of Atheism once settled, there were, however, other important principles to be demonstrated by history.

A second great question to be settled was, whether, with the universal conviction of a divine existence, and an overruling Providence, the world could live without miraculous revelations, and a divinely ordained, objective religion?

From the deluge until God's covenant with Abraham, the race, in its second infancy, was left to work upon the doctrine of *divine Providence, without church or ritual.* This, too, proved unsuccessful. Henceforth we have a division; and one branch of the human family is made the recipient of special miraculous revelations.

The rest of the world are left to work out the final and complete demonstration of the *insufficiency of natural religion, with the guidance of mere human reason.*

This was a great end to be attained before the world could appreciate the revelation of God in Christ. The pride of intellect is ever Christ's worst enemy. God foreseeing this wisely suffered the race to try their boasted reason to its utmost; and it made some noble efforts; for example, Grecian culture.

Here, on Grecian soil, to say nothing of Egyptian and Indian, appeared the culmination of the human intellect without revelation. The Grecian morality and religion show what man could do in his own strength, under most favorable circumstances.

Egypt, Phenicia, Persia, and India, all tried the experiment, of elevating man without miraculous divine aid.

Tried and failed; the insufficiency of reason and natural religion were demonstrated before the advent of Christ. Education cannot redeem the race, and natural reason with its philosophy cannot satisfy

the soul of man: else had Greece evangelized the world.

God, in his providence, suffered our race to produce an everlasting refutation of this plea, of the sufficiency of natural religion, before he introduced Christianity; and there it stands ineffaceably written in all the history of Paganism. The flower of the ancient nations was left (might we not say, *doomed?*) to write it, before the advent of Christ. They wrote it in blood, and fire, and death. Whoever will may read.

This was the mission of ancient heathenism; a mission mournfully well performed.

Going back now to the little Chaldean stock that was called out of Ur, we may inquire what purpose that had to subserve in the divine economy, before the last dispensation should come?

Several ends were, no doubt, subserved by the Abrahamic church, two or three of which may be specified.

Perhaps the first great end of the Hebrew church and people was to develop, substantiate, and diffuse the doctrine of the *Unity of God.*

While the rest of the world narrowed and dwarfed the religious sentiment by its manifold polytheism, the Hebrews kept clear and distinct the idea of the oneness of Deity. They worshipped no national Numen, but God the Creator, Ruler, and Judge of

the world. The sneer of the infidel at the Christian's "Hebrew God," is as groundless and invidious, as is all infidelity. The peculiarity of the Hebrew's Deity was his universality, his eternal, absolute dominion; and to establish forever a faith in the unity and omnipotence of Deity, and thus prepare the way for his threefold revelation, was God's aim in the Hebrew theocracy.

The doctrine of the Trinity could not be well revealed until that of the Unity was substantiated.

But the Hebrew church, also, subserved other important ends.

Between Abraham and Moses the experiment of *a church without prescribed, stated, and constant rituals*, was tried. Here we find a subjective religion, with only such occasional ceremonies as the worshipper might be disposed to perform. Here was a church that had only a covenant and its seal, circumcision; every place serving for its temple, and every man a priest. It was a church without constitution, ritual, law, or ministry. This also proved insufficient; and hence the Mosaic economy was instituted.

Between Moses and Christ was made the great experiment of a theocracy with a divinely communicated law, and a church with a complete ceremonial, with the ministry of priest and prophet, but no Gospel, no God-man fully revealed.

Here *the legal principle was developed; and its*

*insufficiency demonstrated.* It became evident that with all needed revelations, and continual divine guardianship miraculously exercised, man could not "by the works of the law" be justified before God.

The Hebrew theocracy proved that no social polity, no morality, and no external religion could answer the demands of the divine law, and the wants of the human soul.

Thus was God carrying, on through those long, dark eras such experiments as might show to the world the insufficiency of all natural principles and mere human efforts to redeem the race from its degradation. Thus he humbled the pride and self-sufficiency of man, and demonstrated in human history and experience the universal need of an atoning Saviour, and of an incarnate revelation of himself.

The God-man would not come till these demonstrations were complete. Not till Grecian philosophy and art had built their mythology,—not till Judaism had proved the insufficiency of law and ritual,—not till it was plain to the universe that without a Christ our world must eat out its own life and die,—not till the "fulness of time was come,"—would God "send forth his Son."

It was, also, desirable that there should be some expectation and longing for him awakened in the minds of men. And to effect this, as we have seen in the former part of this work, numerous predictions

were given from time to time of his coming, and the great things which he would achieve.

We have seen how earnestly the ancient seers peered into the dim vista of futurity to catch glimpses of his dawning. We remember the Patriarch's remark, that "Judah's sceptre should not depart till Shiloh come;" we remember the promise of an eternal dominion to the family of David: and still more vividly shines the vision of Daniel. No one who hopes for Messiah can forget the "seventy weeks from the time of the decree to restore and to build Jerusalem."

All these intimations turn our attention to a time preceding the final dispersion of the Jews: a time about four hundred years after the completion of the Old Testament; a time about eighteen hundred and fifty years ago; which is to us the beginning of time.

Certain it is, that the best forms of heathenism then began to wane. They had come to their flowering and fruitage; they had done what they could, and were about to die.

The better part of the heathen were yearning for a new religious development. Greeks and Egyptians began to frequent the Hebrew festivals, and to look thitherward for a new faith. Hebrew bigotry and exclusiveness alone prevented them from making still greater advances. They were sick enough of their dead heathenism to embrace anything that had real

life in it. Paganism had finished its demonstration. Natural religion would not do.

Judaism was, also, well nigh through its task. The insufficiency of a legal system began to be evident. The law could "never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect."

Messianic Prophecy seemed, also, to be nearly fulfilled. The sceptre was evidently soon to be reft from Judah. It seemed to be time that "Shiloh" should come. The family of David would, also, soon be scattered and mingled indistinguishably with the other Jews. His promised descendant must soon appear, or none could know to what family he belonged. Bethlehem, the promised place of his nativity, was also soon to be vacated by the Jews.

The seventy weeks, too, were well nigh fulfilled. If Daniel were a prophet of the Lord, the Anointed would then appear.

So thought pious Simeon, Anna, and others who waited in strong expectation of the promised Messiah, the Hope of Israel. So thought even the carnal and worldly Jews who had no real affinity for the Divine One. The ambitious and the discontented who were galled by the Roman yoke expected the Branch of David soon to appear and restore the sinking theocracy.

History tells us of other things that make the beginning of the Christian era seem a fit time for the

appearance of the Prince of Peace. Significant was the peaceful attitude of the nations at the time of Christ's birth.

Allusion has been already, incidentally, made to the place of the advent.

Antecedent probability would fix upon the country where the religious sentiment was most perfectly developed; where the unity of God was most clearly recognized; and where the liveliest expectation of his coming existed.

"To him that hath shall be given." The nation that has the best religion is the one to which we shall look for new developments. If Judea have not so much of arts, or arms, or human lore as other nations, it is rich in theology. It is in morals and religion the garden of the world; there stands the only temple ever built for the true God. Certainly the Jewish mind is best prepared to receive the God-man and his Gospel. Here are the rudiments from which, as a higher development, Christianity may spring; here are already a few earnest hearts yearning in pure devotion for the salvation of Israel.

And prophecy fixes upon Judea, fixes upon Bethlehem. To Bethlehem the world's eye naturally turns.

At the predetermined time and place appeared Jesus, a person whose birth, life, and death seemed to answer the prophetic idea of Messiah. He claimed to be the incarnate manifestation of God in human

history. He substantiated his claim to the satisfaction of the more spiritually minded part of his cotemporaries; he originated a system of doctrines, and imparted to his followers a spiritual life, both of which have been since that time perpetuated, and have acted a prominent part in the history of all the leading nations of the world. At the present time, Cristianity is the leading power, exerting an influence unapproached by anything else in human history. The kingdom of Jesus, though spiritual, and indifferent to the politics of the nations, sways the most of the master minds, and its principles are incorporated into the social and political life of all the best nations of the earth.

The doctrines and spirit of Jesus prove themselves salutary, ennobling, sanctifying, divine. They seem destined gradually to embrace, regenerate, and exalt the entire human race.

These and other considerations forbid that we should regard the man Jesus as a common man. His own history and the history of his religion establish a presumption in favor of his divinity. We must, therefore, study his life, not with the mere indifference of the critic; much less with the spirit of the sceptic. Rather we should aim to enter into the spirit and share the internal life of Him who stands at the head of modern history, and whose influence seems to be moulding and guiding the race to a higher destination.

Certainly, if Jesus be divine, he can only be

rightly understood by those who study him as such. We must keep in mind the idea of the God-man if we would apprehend aright his manifestation. We have reason to presume upon the divinity of Jesus; and we are sure that no presumption lies in favor of any other claimant. If Jesus was not God-man, then there has been no incarnate manifestation of Deity, no divine life miraculously communicated to our race.

In that case Christianity and the life of its founder would forever remain inexplicable phenomena.

Admitting, however, the Godhood of Jesus, both his own life and the history of his religion will be found natural and glorious. Both science and the moral welfare of mankind demand a belief in the divinity of Jesus. All highest problems, intellectual and moral, have an interest in the answer to the question, "Whose Son is he?"

It seems unfortunate for science, that a full biography was not written by the cotemporaries of Jesus. But science was not the aim of his manifestation; he came to impart a new spirit and life to mankind, to make reconciliation between man and God. He chose to leave his portrait in the hearts and characters of his followers rather than on canvas or parchment; he still lives and acts in human history. His manifestation was not completed by his sojourn in Palestine; his spirit is yet revealing the materials of his life; the incarnation is still in progress, the manifestation incomplete. Yet, we have

a peculiar interest in all the facts pertaining to his visible life on earth.

Our faith is quickened and our love animated by the story of his humiliation. God, in the flesh and blood of Jesus, seems nearer to our carnal apprehension than when as a pure spirit he works even in our own hearts. We adore the Father and the Spirit, we *love* the Son.

Happily we are not left with scanty information relative to the incarnate life. Four distinct biographical sketches have come down to us from his cotemporaries, and come with the impress of inspiration upon them. These contain the main facts of the life of Jesus, particularly during his public ministry. Fuller details respecting his early years would be interesting; but faith does not need them. God makes no provision for the gratification of mere curiosity.

The Gospels were evidently written with slightly different objects, and no one of them pretends to be a complete biography. That of John, which approaches nearest to a connected narrative of his life, had for its special aim to prove the divinity of Jesus. Hence, John omitted many of the incidents and discourses which are most significant to him who wishes to study the humanity as well as the divinity of our Lord.

Matthew and John, who alone from the immediate

circle of his disciples wrote Gospels, give us two important phases of the character and life of Jesus. Matthew, a practical business kind of man, narrates more of the exterior human life. John, more contemplative, spiritual, and devout, reveals more of the interior life and spirit of his Master. Mark, who may be regarded as Peter's amanuensis, tells the story of Jesus as it was preached by the "man of Rock." And according to Irenaeus, "Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him." His Gospel comes with Paul's sanction and authority.

It is evident that each of these narratives were written independently, from the discrepancies (unimportant except for this testimony) which they contain; while their agreement, in all essentials, proves their truthfulness.

The first three Evangelists seem to have paid little attention to the chronology of the events recorded; nor did John aim at accuracy in the order of his arrangement. Each gives us the daguerreotype of Jesus as it was depicted upon his own mind.

And, as history has recorded for us little more than these four sketches, our life of Jesus must be compiled from these by harmonizing, combining, and reproducing what they have written.

The chronology of many incidents in the life of Jesus must be uncertain. Where this is the case, it seems proper to connect them according to their sub-

ject-matter in the place which they would seem naturally to occupy in the development of the life. The present work follows, with a few exceptions, the Harmony of Dr. Robinson.

It might be thought proper to say something more of the authority and inspiration of the Gospels; but it does not properly lie within the scope of the present work. We must here assume, at least, the truth of the narratives; and it is believed that no one, who is in sympathy with the exalted spirit which pervades them, can doubt their claims. Certainly no reliable, authentic, ancient history exists, if these be not such; and truth is all that history demands, whether it be inspired or not. But it must be a strange mind that can study such truth as John's Gospel contains, and not be convinced of its inspiration; considering John's education and the age in which he lived.

# PERIOD I.

## FROM THE ANNUNCIATION TO THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

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[Luke 1 : 26—56 ; Matt. 1 : 18—25 ; John 1 : 14.]

THE idea of a divine incarnation involves the miraculous origin of the God-man. Yet, in order to sustain an organic relation to the human race, he must enter the world in the natural way. His generation and birth will, therefore, be both natural and supernatural.

Isaiah predicted that, "a virgin should conceive and bear a son, and call his name Emmanuel." And an older prediction was, that "the woman's seed" should bruise her enemy. These passages, in connection with the necessity for an origin partly natural and partly miraculous, prepare us for the account found in Matthew and Luke of the conception of Jesus. Rather, that account answers the demand of reason, and teaches us how those predictions were to be fulfilled.

An humble, pious, and gifted Virgin of the family of David, related also to the sacerdotal order, is miraculously informed, that she, without knowledge of man, is to become, through the creative power of God, mother of Messiah. "That holy thing which shall be born of thee"—"shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Inasmuch as he is to be generated by "the Holy Ghost" he "shall also be called the Son of God."

To confirm the faith of the surprised and doubting Virgin, a sign was given which induced her to visit her "cousin Elizabeth," who lived near an hundred miles distant. The latter, prompted by inspiration, at once saluted her as the "mother of her Lord," "blessed among women." A supernatural communication was also made to Joseph, to whom Mary was betrothed, by which he was convinced of the miraculous agency in her case, and fitted to become the guardian of the child Jesus.

The miraculous conception is in accordance with other manifestations and revelations of God as set forth in the Bible. It is his plan to superinduce upon natural means and agents supernatural powers and results.

Christ, in his public ministry, made no direct allusion to the manner of his human origin, because he

relied upon his words and works to substantiate his claim to divinity. But the truth of the above account was always assumed by him and the apostles, and was not disputed in their day, as it would have been if doubts had existed respecting it.

[Luke 2 : 1—20.]

That the genealogy of Mary was traceable to David was always assumed by the sacred writers. The genealogy given by Luke was probably that of Mary, given in the name of her husband, Joseph, who was in that case son-in-law, rather than "son of Heli." Though of royal descent, Joseph and Mary lived in humble circumstances in the obscure town of Nazareth. In accordance with the prediction of Micah, that Messiah should come forth from Bethlehem, Providence secured the removal of these persons from Galilee to Judea, before the birth of Jesus.

Palestine being at that time a province of the Roman Empire, Herod was directed by Augustus to forward to Rome a census of his kingdom. Following the old division by tribes, he required every citizen to be found during a prescribed period within the territory of the tribe from which he claimed descent. Joseph and Mary, belonging to the tribe of Judah, repaired to their ancestral town, Bethlehem.

Arrived at the small, though famous, city of David, they found the houses of entertainment crowded beyond the possibility of new admissions.

To supply the lack of houses, the caves in the hills about the town were resorted to as temporary dwellings by the visitors. In one of these, formerly occupied as a stable, Joseph and Mary took up their residence as troglodytes, during the taking of the census, which probably occupied several weeks.*

In that stable, in strange contrast with the greatness of the event, was born Jesus, by Isaiah named Emmanuel. The circumstances under which he entered the world were in accordance with the condescension involved in the advent. Having stooped to a human incarnation, he would but have been mocked by aught that we count dignity. Five miles north of Bethlehem was a royal court, and what was called the throne of David. But he whose throne was to be eternal, and who had all dignity and royalty in himself, would find his birth-place where David was born in obscurity.

Yet, humble as was the advent of this "Branch of Jesse," he was royally heralded. All past history and prophecy proclaimed him. Angels announced his birth; and some pious souls even in Bethlehem were ready to welcome him.

* The apparent anachronism in the account of this census and the magistracy of Cyrenius or Quirinus, results from the fact that no stress was laid upon the incident. The original does not say that it was taken *when* he was governor. The truth alluded to in the paragraph probably was that this census was taken by Quirinus (afterward known as) governor of Syria.

Humble shepherds, wont to employ their lonely watches in devout meditations, first heard the "good tidings." Guarding as usual their flocks upon the hills around Bethlehem, they are startled by a great light suddenly breaking upon them from the skies. In the midst of this display appears an angel, saying, "Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Anon the angel is joined by a multitude who sing in full chorus amid the gleaming splendor, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Such a demonstration angels make at the advent; and so few and humble were the witnesses of their celebration. For the most part mankind have no knowledge of this great event, and no care for "Christ the Lord."

Yet the "good tidings" were not lost. The shepherds found the grotto of the Nazerene sojourners, and "the babe lying in a manger." And still the angels' song is repeated to the ages, and waxes ever louder, "for all people."

It is said that the shepherds reported what they had seen and heard "concerning this child. And all they that heard, wondered at those things which were

told them by the shepherds." An idle wonder was all the result, so far as the multitude was concerned. Judea was busy with its taxings and traffic and common babble. Only a pious few are in sympathy with the grand event of the age.

The fact that the shepherds were in the fields on the night of Christ's birth affords a hint relative to the season of the year. It could not have been so late as the latter part of our December, after the winter, or rainy season, had commenced. All things considered, October is the most probable month.

[Luke 2 : 21—38.]

On the eighth day the babe was circumcised and named Jesus, or Saviour, as the angel had directed at the time of the annunciation.

The faith of Joseph and Mary in the Messiahship of the child caused no hesitation respecting the propriety of his circumcision. Submission to this ordinance was in accordance with Christ's plan and life. He would honor existing institutions until they were abrogated by the introduction of a higher dispensation. It availed not that he was himself to supersede the old rite by a higher ordinance.

Another illustration of the same principle was afforded in the offering made for the purification of Mary and the redemption of her first-born.

The question might have arisen whether the

mother of "that holy thing" should be regarded as unclean? and whether the Great High Priest of the race should pay the ransom demanded by the common obligation to the priesthood? But these questions were not mooted. Mary would claim no exemption on the ground of her divine favor; and she would leave to God the proclamation of her Son's high mission. As above, they would honor the existing law, and "fulfil all righteousness."

The quiet circumstances under which the little family appeared at Jerusalem, forty days after the birth of Jesus, show that the event excited little interest at the time. The divine child received no peculiar attention at Jerusalem, except from the aged and devout Simeon and Anna.

Amongst the constant worshippers about the temple, were two, who with a true piety looked for the "consolation of Israel." To Simeon had been given a divine assurance that he should see the Lord's anointed with his bodily sight. As the parents enter the temple to present their gift, the spirit of inspiration again awakes in the old man, and, to the wonder of Joseph and Mary, he catches the child from their arms, exclaiming in a strain of praise, that he can now die in peace, since his eyes have seen that "salvation," or Saviour, provided of God as a light for the Gentiles and the glory of Israel. Turning then to the strangers with a blessing, he predicts, in a few comprehensive words, the conflicts and final triumph

of Jesus, and the sorrows that should befall his mother. Anna who entered the temple just as Simeon took the child, receiving the same impression, joined him in his thanksgiving, and spoke of the child to others of her acquaintance who were longing with a true faith for the advent of Messiah.

The intimation here given of the conflicts of Christ, and the extension of his influence to the Gentiles, shows that Simeon had no narrow, bigoted view of the mission of the Anointed.

There were here, as in Bethlehem, a few souls ready to welcome the God-man in his humble disguise. And the spirit of prophecy guides them to him.

[Matt 2: 1—12.]

The following incident confirms a remark already made that pagans, as well as Jews, were looking for a great king and Saviour to arise in Judea. Amongst the eastern astrologers were some whose minds seemed to be in sympathy with the movements of Providence, and who were looking for a "Star to rise out of Jacob."

Probably the same light which gleamed with such splendor around Bethlehem, on the night of Jesus' birth, was seen by these far off Magi, as it were a new star hovering over Judea. To them such a star portended the birth of a notable king. And so deeply were they impressed with this omen that they determined to provide themselves with costly gifts and visit the star-heralded Prince.

Whether from Arabia, as their gifts might indicate, or, as is probable, from Persia, the journey of the astrologers was long and tedious; and hence they did not reach Judea until after the visit of Jesus and his mother to Jerusalem. Herod should not hear of the New-born King until the requirements of the law relative to purification and ransom were fulfilled.

Probably the "star" was seen by the Magi but a single night, but their observations convinced them that it appeared over Judea; and hence they bend their steps to the Jewish capital, expecting to find the Prince about the court of Herod.

But Herod and his ministry know less than they about the matter. No king of the Jews is born there. Still, aware that the people are looking for Messiah, Herod calls the expounders of prophecy and inquires "where Christ should be born?" He and his satellites are sorely troubled at the story of the Magi. Fear and jealousy, as usual, possess the wicked king, and in perfect accordance with his character he resolves to control this matter. The scribes and priests have no difficulty in determining the place marked by prophecy as the birth-place of Messiah. Micah had pointed to little Bethlehem as the town from which should come the Ruler, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity."

Having questioned them closely respecting the time when the star appeared, and enjoined upon them when they have found the young child to bring him

word, hypocritically pretending a desire to do him reverence, Herod directs the Magi to Bethlehem. Turning towards the place, to their great joy as they leave Jerusalem, a star or meteor again appears, which they take to be the same they had seen from the east; and following it they are conducted to the little family of Joseph. The "stable" has been exchanged for a house in the village, over which the "star" seems to rest, and within which they find "the young child with his mother." According to eastern custom they do homage, and present rich gifts to the infant king. Here their search terminates. This night they will lodge in Bethlehem; to-morrow they may report to Herod their success, and set out for their eastern home.

But the night brings a vision and a warning. An impressive dream bids them avoid Herod, and conceal from him the results of their search. The dream is obeyed and the wily Herod is foiled. "They depart to their own country another way," and we hear of them no more.

Their guidance by a "star" is one of many instances where God condescended to instruct and guide men to higher truth and light by working through their superstition and error. The astrologers believed that the appearance of a new star indicated the birth of a great king, such as their hearts longed to find. God made their astrological faith a means of bringing them to his Son. So He often comes

down and meets the aspirations of those who seek after truth, making even their weaknesses leading-strings to bring them to Himself.*

But what of thwarted Herod? He who had attained and held the throne contrary to the wishes of his countrymen, who had been led by jealousy and the fear of being deposed to plot and execute the murder of many of his nearest relatives, even his own sons, would not forget the story of the Magi, nor fail to seek revenge for the frustration of his plan.

[Matt. 2: 13—18.]

He awaits in restless anxiety the return of the strangers; but in vain. His anxiety soon changes to anger. Shall a rival for the throne be tolerated within his province? Something must be done, and done speedily. Up, and purge Bethlehem and its environs with the sword. Let no infant live; murder all, and be sure of the right one; is Herod's fierce direction to his soldiers. All Messianic Prophecy and all the decrees of Omnipotence check not the madness of the wicked king. He can even plot the murder of God's Anointed. Thus earthly kingship

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* Nothing has been here said of the theory that the new star was the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn. The theory is plausible, and in no respect repugnant to the idea of a providential use of the phenomenon to lead the Magi to Christ. The Chinese record of the appearance of a new star about the time of Christ's birth is also noteworthy in this connection.

welcomes the king divine! Thus, soon the holy child becomes the object of suspicion, malice, and persecution.

The soldiers of Herod make speedy work. "In Rama is heard a voice, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning." In every house flows innocent blood; but not the blood of Emmanuel. There is a king stronger, wiser, and swifter in his purposes than the jealous Herod.

Scarce had the Magi gone ere Joseph, in a dream, was warned by "the angel of the Lord" to flee the domain of Herod, and save "the young child's life." In haste the little family quit the place. Southward and westward, by forced march, fast and fearful wend the fugitives; and soon "the coasts" of Bethlehem are cleared, and the banks of the Sihor are reached, and the little river forded, and they are in Egypt, and safe, ere Herod has published his cruel decree. Egypt, now friendly to Judea, has countrymen of Joseph, and synagogues, and hospitality for the weary Mary and her Son. Here for the present they may rest and sojourn.

Meantime Herod, believing that he "who was born king of the Jews" is amongst those that "are not," sits easier for a few days in his purple; until a greater king, to him pre-eminently "king of terrors," bids him exchange the purple robe and the palace for the shroud and the grave. By fierce disease passes the first persecutor of our Lord to his end; leaving

his kingdom to Archelaus, Antipas, Philip, and Salome.

[Matt. 2: 18—23; Luke 2: 39—40.]

Again the guardian angel of the little, exiled family appears to Joseph, and bids him return to his country. The length of their sojourn in Egypt is unknown; it may have been four months or twenty-four. It was long enough to effect the desired end; and Jesus, as Israel and Moses his types had been, was "called out of Egypt." His age at this time was probably about two years, perhaps over two.

Upon his return "into the land of Israel" Joseph seems to have meditated a permanent settlement in his native Bethlehem. But learning that Archelaus, who possessed Herod's disposition and emulated his cruelty, had received the southern part of the kingdom, his fears for the safety of his charge returned. Galilee was under the control of Antipas, a comparatively mild and humane prince, and hence safety seemed to point to Nazareth, the place of Joseph's former residence. Confirmed by an impressive night-vision, in his inclination to return to the province of Antipas, he pushes on past Judea to Nazareth of Galilee. Archelaus was banished to Vienna, by the Roman Emperor, in the tenth year of his reign; and it is doubtful whether Jesus again visited Judea while he was in power.

Here then, in the evil village of Nazareth, is to

grow up the holy child. Nature made his youthful home beautiful, as travellers find it still, a sunny valley begirt with mountains; but its inhabitants were proverbially debased. The pious foster-father, Joseph, would have chosen a residence near the holy city, that his miraculously given charge might grow up near the temple. But he who was "to read without having learned," and to speak "as one having authority," had no need of the instruction of scribe and priest. He would not be indebted to human teachers, nor should they claim the honor of his instruction.

The record of the childhood and youth of Jesus is brief. "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

He "grew." Subject to the common laws of growth and development, he passed through all the phases of human life. Physically and mentally his humanity unfolded itself in orderly beauty. He was the model child. He "waxed strong in spirit," and was "filled with wisdom;" his mind was not dwarfed and shaded by the body. The original harmony and balance was maintained in his expanding constitution; depravity did not unhinge the better reason.

The people of Nazareth, however, saw in him only superior acuteness, amiableness, and purity. Even his own family connections could not discern the budding divinity of their favorite. He "grew in

favor" with them; but they knew not how much he also grew in favor "with God." The meditative Mary, and perhaps the wondering Joseph, could see that "the grace of God was upon him."

Would that we had a larger picture of that beautiful childhood.

[Luke 2: 41—52.]

Twelve years were regarded by the Jews as completing the period of childhood. Then began the period of youth, and with it special religious instruction; the study of the law, and probably the first attendance upon the passover at Jerusalem. Hence, it was probably in obedience to legal requisition that Jesus at the age of twelve accompanied his parents to the feast. Females were not required to attend the passover, but many voluntarily accompanied their husbands, fathers, and brothers; so that whole families and entire communities often joined together, forming a large caravan. Such companies generally had all things common and made a festal-season of the march and the sojourn at Jerusalem.

We can readily conceive that the meditative, pious boy would find the atmosphere of the temple peculiarly attractive. Here his aspiring mind and ardent soul first found company. The sacrifices, typical of that great sacrifice which he should offer in due time, the reading and exposition of the law, and the theological discourse of the priests, scribes, and Pharisees,

absorbed his whole attention. He eagerly embraced the opportunity for catechetical instruction sometimes offered by the priests. A common child would have found other objects of interest and wonder in the great capital of the theocracy. But Jesus would be "about his Father's business."

Upon the first day of the march homeward after the feast, the parents supposing Jesus to be somewhere amongst their friends in the caravan, thought it not strange that they had not seen him on the way. But when at evening he could not be found, their fears were excited, and the next day they returned seeking him. The second day passes; they are again in Jerusalem; but no one can tell them aught of the child. The third day comes, and the search continues. He is not with any of the companies of children in the streets, or in places of common resort. But at last he is discovered sitting like a rabbi amongst the Doctors of the law, and joining in their discussions. The rabbins marvel at the answers and questions of the seemingly precocious child. They find him "strong in spirit, filled with wisdom;" and all who hear him listen in astonishment. The wonder was that at an age when children were expected to commence the study of the law, he seemed already to have mastered it, and that, too, without school or teacher.

His answer to his mother's inquiry, why he had caused them this search and anxiety? shows that he

felt already the dawning consciousness of his mission. As if a youthful haste impelled him to his great work, he seemed to think that he should remain at the seat of the theocracy, and at once begin his ministry. So powerfully had the imposing services he had witnessed wrought upon his mind that he felt as if he were already called upon to be up and doing. But his time has not yet come. As Moses was forced to flee into Midian and await God's time to deliver Israel, so must the ardent boy retire again to his humble and unattractive home. With a ready obedience he accompanies his parents, hiding his high aspirations, and serving them henceforth with filial submission. His reply to Mary is his first allusion to his divine generation, "Wist ye not that I must be about *my Father's business?*" not Joseph's business. Though just from Nazareth, he felt that he was from above, that in a peculiar sense God was his father. Yet as a son he would learn obedience, and submit to his human guardians.

The record says that "he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart." The prudent Mary made no boast of her wonderful boy, neither could she forget these occasional glimpses of his heavenly origin and divine mission.

"And Jesus increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God and man." And this is all that is told us of his history for the next eighteen years.

How unlike is this biography to all uninspired, and particularly all fabulous, histories! The apocryphal New Testaments show what a life of Jesus uninspired men would write. But the inspired pen is concerned only to set forth his public ministry and mediatorial works, and hence passes with a few characteristic strokes straight to his majority and the great events of his public life. The brevity of the Gospels, and their freedom from all that does not bear directly upon the great object of the advent, mark them as parts of the sacred canon.

From the few hints left us relative to the youth and early manhood of Jesus, we infer that he remained in Nazareth, probably in the work-shop of Joseph, giving no further indications of the great purposes that were growing and ripening within him, until he attained the age of thirty. His constitution continued to be developed in the same rapid manner until he attained maturity. He became more and more a favorite in society; and a seeming prodigy in wisdom. Even the degraded Nazarenes could find no fault in him, unless it were his superior purity. His amiableness and kindness of manner doubtless conciliated those who would otherwise have envied and hated him for his goodness and wisdom.

Respecting his education we are only informed that he was never taught even to read, in the ordinary way. Hence, the question of those Nazarenes who, after he entered upon his public ministry, heard him

read and expound the law, "How can this man read, not having learned?" Even with their sneering envy and unbelief they could not deny that he had this miraculous endowment.

Sceptics have sought, in various ways, to account for the wisdom and knowledge afterward exhibited by Jesus.

But the character of his doctrines and the style of his discourses, as well as the Evangelists' testimony, prove that he was not formed in any of the schools of his age. He was unlike, and superior to, all that had ever before appeared in the world. Nothing could be truer than that he spake "as never man spake," both as to style and matter. Some things may be found that were common to him and the schools of that day. Pharisaism, Sadduceeism, and Essenism had each some truth incorporated with their absurdities; and with whatever of truth they possessed Christ agreed. But the points of agreement were few, the points of difference many.

Christianity has several points of agreement with the doctrines of the Essenes, e. g., a firm belief in God, deep religious zeal, the prohibition of oaths and of slavery, and peculiar attention to the sick. But Essenism is narrow and exclusive; Christianity broad and catholic. Essenism is a legal, monkish mysticism; Christianity a new, active, spiritual life. The latter never could have grown out of the former.

Christ could not have drawn his doctrines from such a source. The same is true of the Alexandrine theology and philosophy. Could these systems have been learned from their wisest teachers by the Nazarene youth, they never would have accounted for his preaching. His teachings were wholly original; he evidently drew his divine oratory from the depths of his own spirit. His words were the words of God, always new and unlike all else. In fine, the Evangelists have said all that can be said of the education of Jesus. He "increased in wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." The divine light was gradually unfolded under human conditions, not because it was necessary for him to pass through the common processes of development and culture, but in order that he might enter into all the experiences and sympathies of man, and thus become our perfect High Priest.

His experience of the evil of sin was not to be internal, but to be gained by long and close communion with sinners in every condition of life.

We may regard the years spent in Nazareth as a long study of human character and life, as it appeared in some of those who most needed redemption. In the shop, in the field, from the hill-tops, in the caravan going up to Jerusalem, at the solemn feast and ceremonial, in the temple amongst the Doctors, in all places and circumstances, Jesus was a close observer; and thus he grew familiar with the human heart and

the life of mankind. Add to this the peculiar favor of God which rested upon him, and we have the secret of his early life and culture. In such exercises he spent his youth, and by communion with the Father prepared himself to enter upon his high mission.

Before leaving the period of Jesus' youth and of his residence at Nazareth, a word may be appropriate relative to Joseph and his family.

It was a wise and kind providence that selected the fatherly Joseph to be the guardian of this "young child and his mother." The character and conduct of Joseph after his espousal of Mary prove that he was "a just man," as the Evangelist says.

Tradition relates that he was a widower and had children before his marriage to Mary. These may have been they who were called "the brothers and sisters" of Jesus. Still, it is not improbable that Joseph had younger children by Mary. Indeed this seems to be altogether probable. The residence at Bethlehem, the flight and sojourn in Egypt, and many other incidents of the history, give the impression that Joseph had no other family-charge at that time.

But whether the brethren of Jesus were or were not the children of Mary is immaterial. There is nothing improper in the supposition that they were. This we are told, that though they had grown up as companions of the holy child, they had no adequate

conception of his superiority. Familiarity alone would prevent reverence, and blind them to his merits. Hence, during his lifetime, they were unbelievers. Their conversion after his death proves, however, that they had never known in their brother anything inconsistent with his claim to divinity. Time and reflection compelled even them to admit his divinity; and that, too, after he had been cut off, and all hope of his temporal kingdom and glory had faded. Christ sought no emoluments for family or friends. He went his own rugged way, and drew after him none who were insusceptible to the attractions of truth and piety.

Of the last years of Joseph nothing is told us. Raised up to be the early protector of the Virgin's son, he seems to have fulfilled this mission and passed away in silence before the majority of Jesus.

Of Mary, during the period under consideration, we know only that she was the discreet matron who guarded her household, and cherished "in her heart" the strange history of "her first-born son." Providence granted her to outlive her husband and to see the fulfilment of the prophetical message brought to her by the angel, and also of the bodeful prediction of Simeon, that a "sword should pierce through her own soul."

Such is the story of the youth of Messiah. Thus the Branch of Jesse came up in obscurity. As "a

root out of dry ground" there is no attraction, or comeliness in him, for the worldly and the proud. When at length he goes forth upon his great mission "he shall be called a Nazarene."

# PERIOD II.

## COMMENCEMENT OF CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

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[Luke 3: 1—18; Matt. 3: 1—12; Mark 1: 1—8.]

In his visits to Jerusalem to attend the Passover Jesus had probably met his second cousin, John; or at least heard something respecting him. As the residences of the cousins, Mary and Elizabeth, were probably nearly one hundred miles apart, and Mary had been obliged to flee from Judea with her child, there was of necessity but little intercourse between them. The sympathizing mothers may have made their sons aware, to some extent, of the great promises that were miraculously given them. Yet so closely did they keep these things in their hearts, that John had no assurance of the Messiahship of Jesus, until it was miraculously given at the Baptism.

Jesus probably had a more thorough knowledge of John and his mission. Conscious of his own mission and studious of the Messianic Prophecies, he no

doubt early discovered that he was to be publicly preceded by a herald who should cry to the people, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." This assurance, that a divine providence was to prepare the way for his public ministry, probably allayed the ardor and haste exhibited in his twelfth year; and made Jesus content to remain "subject to his parents," an obscure mechanic, until the voice of the herald should prepare the way for his public manifestation.

In the thirtieth year of Jesus, news came to Nazareth that a new and great prophet had arisen in the desert of Judea, in the person of his distant relative. The prophet was reported to be a stern, wild, moral giant of the desert: a miracle was said to have attended his conception and birth; somewhat of mystery hung about his life. Of the order of the priesthood, "strong in spirit," and of ardent piety, he had early betaken himself to the order of monks, dwelling in the rocks and caverns along the Dead Sea. But, unlike the other recluses of the age, when he attained the age of thirty, the age at which priests entered upon public service, John came forth as a public reformer. Claiming to be divinely appointed, and confirming his claim by his fervid eloquence, his stern rebuke of sin, his pure doctrines and faultless life, the impression made by him was startling and profound. His very dress and demeanor reproduced and realized the idea of the ancient seers. During four hundred years there had been "no prophet in Israel."

But the seal of the book of prophecy bore the promise, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." And now it was as if Elijah had come. There was "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." The character of his message gave to this prophet his greatest power: "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The Jews, and the world, were looking for a new king and kingdom, a kingdom of righteousness. To the galled Jew, fretting under the Roman yoke, nothing could be more attractive than the prospect of a new kingdom. John, in the spirit and power of Elijah, stands up alone in this godless age to proclaim with trumpet voice the approach of the long desired sign of Messiah. His voice is echoed and re-echoed between the banks of the Jordan, rolled back and repeated over the hills and valleys of Judea, and borne onward to the obscurest villages of Palestine. The nation is moved, and multitudes throng around the preacher to receive his rite, symbolical of repentance and preparation for citizenship in the coming kingdom. But there is a peculiarity in the conditions proposed by him for admittance into that kingdom, which the proud and self-righteous can ill endure. Count not, says he, upon your Abrahamic descent for admittance into the kingdom of God. "I baptize with water, but there comes one after me who shall

baptize with fire." Those who truly repent he will baptize with the Holy Ghost and receive into his domain. But to the rest, the day of the Lord will be "great and dreadful." He that cometh will sit as a refiner, and purify the theocracy. The true wheat he will gather, but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. Think not, says John, that Messiah will need you; and of course receive you, because you belong to the theocratic people. God can raise up children to Abraham from the very stones under your feet. Not blood-relationship, but purity of heart, shall be the condition of acceptance in the new kingdom.

Standing between the new and the old dispensations, John, with others of his age, looked for a temporal kingdom and visible reign of Messiah. Yet he saw clearly that only the truly devout should enter his kingdom, and that it would embrace Gentiles as well as Jews.

The mission of John was to prepare the people rather for the new kingdom than for the king himself. Hence, he at first received no divine assurance relative to the person of Messiah. Of this he is, however, assured that Messiah is near, and that he shall, in the course of his ministry, discover him. At the same time a sign is given him by which he may recognize his greater successor. "I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit

descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Anxiously, no doubt, did the baptizer await this token, as stranger after stranger came devoutly forward to receive his ordinance. But multitudes came and went, and the arduous labors of the prophet went on increasing.

Meantime Jesus, the Nazarene, "begins to be about thirty years of age." Again the impulse kindles within him to "be about his Father's business." From afar he hears the voice of the herald preparing his way; from the hill-top above his home he gazes yearningly towards Judea and the Jordan. He has a "baptism to be baptized with," and is "straitened till it be accomplished." As his thirtieth birth-day approaches his resolution is taken. His quiet citizen-life must end; he must away into the whirl and storm of public service. The great work of mediation presses. A gospel is to be preached; a model life exhibited, and an atoning sacrifice offered for the world; the kingdom of heaven must begin. Farewell sunny, quiet Nazareth; farewell kind mother Mary, and kindly Nazarenes; and farewell, also, peace and rural, home delights, and quiet meditation. Henceforth, the Son of Mary shall be a man of sorrows. Soon shall suspicion, envy, and hate track the amiable, humble, holy Jesus. But "for this cause came I into the world, that I might work the works of him that sent me."

The ministry of John is the transition from the old dispensation to the new. His baptism was the preparatory rite of initiation into the new kingdom.

Christ, before his public ministry, lived as a disciple of Moses, submitted to circumcision and the other requisitions of the law. It was, therefore, natural that he should also honor by his observance the transitionary rite of John; thus confirming the Baptist's commission, and passing through the common steps which united the old and the new. Moreover, an outward, formal inauguration into his public ministry would seem appropriate for the man Jesus. And it might be anticipated that he who was to end Messianic Prophecy, and specially herald in the Christ, would somewhere meet his great successor and superior, and receive the seal both of the culmination of his own ministry, and of the beginning of Christ's.

Jesus had no need to be "baptized unto repentance," as had others who came to John. Neither had he any need of circumcision; nor did it seem appropriate that the "redemption of the first-born" should be paid in his case, in infancy. But thus he would "fulfil all righteousness;" thus he would honor all divine institutions; thus also he would pass from the private subject to the public leader, prophet, priest, and king.

John had received assurance that he should see the Spirit descend upon the Son of God; and the intimation imported that this miracle would attend

the administration of his ordinance. Yet he could not realize the truth that Messiah should submit to his inferior baptism. Hence his reluctance when Jesus appeared and demanded the rite.

[Matt. 3: 13—17; Mark 1: 9—11; Luke 3: 21—23.]

His summer's work was drawing to a close ere the Baptist discovered amongst the multitudes about him any presence that struck him as being more than human.

But one day in early autumn, after "all the people were baptized," we may suppose,—after the ordinary labors of the day were ended and the congregation had retired, as the weary Baptizer sat by the Jordan musing upon his mission and upon the promise of Him that should come,—of a sudden appeared before him a Galilean of humble garb and mien, but of look and manner peculiarly devout and impressive, who craved the rite of baptism.

A brief conversation disclosed to John the fact that the stranger was his Nazarene relative, of whose miraculous early history and superior wisdom and purity he had perhaps heard. A long-cherished apprehension that this Jesus may be the Messiah whom he was to proclaim, revives within the mind of John, and receives so strong a confirmation from the bearing and demeanor of Jesus, that it becomes to him a vivid reality, and in the full consciousness of his own unworthiness he exclaims, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?"

Yielding at length to the expostulation of Jesus, who assures him that it is proper, considering their present relation, John being the forerunner, he reverently proceeds to administer the ordinance. His reverence and awe are increased by the devout attitude of Jesus, who himself accompanies the ceremony with prayer. But his emotions reach a thrilling climax when the heavens above seem to open, and amid the down-streaming glory the prophet's rapt vision sees as it were a descending dove hovering down and resting upon Jesus; while from the open heaven falls a voice as of the Ancient of days, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Again the rent sky closes, and there is silence; and, following the guiding Dove, the beloved Son hastens away over rock and defile to the desert; and the awe-struck prophet stands as if spell-bound, murmuring, in ecstatic bewilderment, "Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. I see and bear record that this is the Son of God."

Jesus is henceforth Christ, the anointed. The Spirit he possessed before, but he is now outwardly and formally consecrated to his ministry. His baptism signifies, not as in the case of others, a new inner life, but the entrance upon a new external life. This is his ordination and inaugural. The miracle attending the baptism seems to have been given solely

to establish the faith of John. It was important that the last of the prophetical order, who was also the first preacher of a new dispensation, should receive supernatural evidence that Jesus was the Christ. This he received through the symbolical descent of the Spirit, and the voice from heaven. Henceforth he can give unqualified testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus.

But as it is rather his duty to proclaim the advent, and the approach of the new kingdom, than to point out the person of Messiah (who would doubtless shine clear enough by his own light when he should choose to manifest himself), John confines his knowledge of Jesus as Messiah to a few of his more apt disciples, and continues his preparatory labors. The presence of Christ does not lead him to sit down in indolence; but rather renews his zeal. As a faithful watchman he resolved to stand at his post till the Master recalled him.

[John 1: 19—28.]

As the season advanced, the fame and influence of John increased; while as yet Jesus remained in retirement and obscurity. Many of the people, who knew nothing of Jesus, began to declare their belief in the Messiahship of John the Baptist. Thereupon the Sanhedrim, who had before taken no official notice of John, sent a deputation to inquire definitely into his pretensions and aims. Suspecting their designs,

John answered them guardedly; yet he gave an unqualified negative to the question, whether or no he were the Christ? The friendship, faith, and zeal of multitudes of converts never induced him to cherish a thought of elevation above his commission, as herald of a greater. He knew well his own place, and was content with it; he would not be called Messiah; he would not even be called Elias, though Malachi had long before given him that name, because tradition and popular belief declared that the Elias that should come would be the old prophet raised to life.

I am not that prophet, I am not Elias, I am but a voice; and as such I bid you prepare to meet one "whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose." Even now, says he, "there standeth one among you whom ye know not," but "who is preferred before me. Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Thus he announces the advent, without naming Jesus.

So upright and faithful to his trust is this great reformer.

[Matt. 4: 1—11; Mark 1: 12, 13; Luke 4: 1—13.]

Near forty days have now passed since the baptism of Jesus, and as yet he remains, no one knows where. Though formally consecrated to his ministry, and though his life had been all a preparation for his mission, and though "full of the Holy Ghost," he will not enter hastily and rashly upon his great enterprise.

Son of God as he is, he feels the need of retirement, meditation, prayer, and self-discipline. The fulness of the Spirit, the consciousness of divinity, do not remove the feeling of human weakness and dependence.

The proclamation of his Sonship at the baptism, and the feeling that now his great enterprise was to begin, seem to have pressed with mountain weight upon the soul of Jesus. Occupied with his great thoughts he wandered away through the mountains in solitude, amid wild beasts and dangers. Unconsciously he threaded the dark ravine, scaled the dizzy crag, and trod the lone cavern of the beast of prey. None can tell the struggles of those dark days. He contemplated the ruined race of mankind, the great enterprise he had undertaken for them, the plan and means by which he should accomplish his great purposes, and the killing toils and sufferings that were to attend his ministry. Moreover, the "Tempter," dark spirit of evil, was about him. Could he but have seduced the oppressed and perplexed Jesus to abandon his project, could he have broken the holy charm in which lay the secret of his strength, could he have fastened but one sinful thought or feeling upon that stranger in the desert, it would have been Satan's grandest triumph.

It was with Jesus the contest between Adam and the Serpent, between sinless humanity and the wily, wicked Devil. In this sore spiritual conflict the

wants of the body were forgotten. Forty days of abstract meditation and inward struggles were spent in fasting. Hunger, peril, wild beasts, and demons beset the beloved Son, while he pondered the work of redemption and prayed for guidance and strength.

Three specific devices of the Devil, perhaps his last efforts at this time, are recorded as samples of the temptations suffered during these forty days.

The first was a wily appeal to the bodily appetites of Jesus, a device to ensnare him by the "law of the flesh."

We can well believe that after forty days' fasting "Jesus hungered." Starting at last from his reverie and deep meditations, like one awaking from a delirious dream, he became conscious of exhaustion and almost insupportable hunger. But he was in the dreary desert where not even the "locusts and wild honey" that nourished the Baptist could be obtained. To seek the habitations of man in this exhausted state seemed next to impossible. How should he obtain a morsel of meat to prevent starvation? The tempter suggests a feasible and speedy plan. "Why, faint and feeble, seek food in the ordinary way? I have now miraculous power, why not use it for my own benefit? As God gave the Israelites bread from heaven, why shall not I change these stones into food?" Thus arise the tempter's suggestions in the mind of Jesus. The principle involved was distrust of Providence and the use of miraculous power for

selfish, sensual ends. With an appropriate text Jesus fortified himself, rose above the evil thought, and foiled the tempter. Thus he triumphed once for all over the carnal appetite, and showed himself superior to the flesh, and determined not to free himself from the weaknesses and toils incident to other men. Nor in all his ministry would he ever use his supernatural power to overcome the difficulties and dangers that beset him. At any time he might have summoned "more than twelve legions of angels" to his aid. But he would rather confide in that common Providence who supplies, in his own wise way, his children's wants. Nor could such confidence be vain. In due time "angel's minister" to the fainting Saviour.

Returning consciousness of his natural wants now seems to have led the wanderer to the abodes of men, still occupied with his weighty, bodeful thoughts, and still haunted by the tempter. We see him next upon a dizzy height on the south side of the temple, standing as in a dream. Seven hundred feet below him lies the valley. As he gazes down from this giddy height, the watchful fiend insinuates a new train of dangerous thoughts. Jesus' mind now runs upon fate, and providence, and free will, and kindred doctrines. Then comes up the question, how far God will now sustain and guard him? "He shall give his angels charge over thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up," whispers the tempter. Good Scripture,

doubtless. "Then prove God's truth and the completeness of his providence and thy own acceptance by leaping off this pinnacle." But Jesus can quote Scripture to better purpose. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" is his reply. God will no doubt guard his children in real danger. But let no one throw himself needlessly into danger in order to test God's faithfulness, or to gratify an idle curiosity. God works no miracles to dissipate our doubts. Thus Jesus rises above that dark, distrustful, questioning disposition to which men of deep thought and inward struggles are liable. The Spirit that tempted him was that which led a Manfred to the Alpine cliff, and a Faust to barter his soul to the Devil. But Faust and Manfred knew not how to triumph by a simple faith in God, as did Jesus.

The last temptation of this period would have been a still more powerful appeal to human selfishness and weakness.

Retreating again to the desolate mountains, as if fleeing from the evil spirit that tracked him, the agitated, weary Jesus climbs the highest peak of the rugged mountains and gazes abroad from this elevation upon the surrounding kingdoms, into which Palestine is divided. Here lies, in open view around him, the field of his coming toils, and the miniature of that kingdom which he is to found and govern.

These kingdoms are now sunk in sin, and to introduce here a kingdom of righteousness by common

means is a long and laborious task. Toil, persecution, death itself, and ages of missionary culture must precede the regeneration of this beloved land. True, the promise of the whole earth for Christ's inheritance is sure. But how long and severe the process, if his kingdom be developed gradually from an inner germ of spiritual life.

Here is the tempter's last hope. Again he whispers to the musing, weary one his evil counsel. "Why wait the long, sore process of developing a pure, spiritual kingdom? Why not yield something to the spirit of the age, erect a temporal throne, pander to the carnal ambition of the nation, and at once assume dominion? True, this plan involves the present support of the idolatry and demon-worship now in vogue; but will not the end justify the means? Once established on a sure throne, as you may soon be by using your miraculous power for the attainment of the people's wishes, you may afterward, at leisure, reform and improve your empire. This theocracy may at once be under your control by yielding, in a politic way, a little present homage to the God of this world."

Thus cunning sophistry is addressed to the ambition and human haste and love of ease which Jesus as a man may be supposed to feel in common with other men.

But the firm purpose of redemption and of the establishment of a spiritual kingdom by self-denying

toil, and the feeling of supreme devotion to the Father's will rise again triumphant. Summoning his wearied energies for one final stroke and rising in stern majesty and rebuke, with somewhat of divine authority, he thunders upon the fiend—"Behind me, Satan! God only shall be worshipped!"

Awe-struck and terrified the foiled demon sinks away. The beloved Son feels the burden of temptation roll off; a holy calm and peace come over him. He looks up longingly to his loving Father, who smiles down his approval. Anon the mountain becomes his Father's house, he sits at heaven's banquet, and angels minister to the weary victor. Thus ends the first sore trial of the Man of sorrows.

It was a contest between the created will, sustained by a divine purpose, on the one hand, and the old prince and power of evil, on the other. But the tempter's tares could not root in the sacred soil. There was in Jesus no affinity for his suggestions.

Yet the temptation affords one of the best exhibitions of the perfect humanity of our Lord. Truly he was "tempted in all points, like as we are, yet without sin."

By such discipline the human nature of our Lord was prepared for his public ministry and active life. The process was swift, but fierce and terrible. Henceforth it is settled that the created humanity shall be sacrificed to the divine purpose, that the spirit of the world shall be resisted, and that the kingdom of

heaven shall come by slow, gradual, spiritual development, growing outward from the internal life of its founder.

[John 1: 29—42.]

While this internal preparation was going on in the mind of Jesus, John the Baptist, as before remarked, continued his preaching in the valley of the Jordan. As yet he mentions his discovery of the Christ to no one, though his remark to the committee of the Sanhedrim, that Messias was amongst them, implied that he knew him, whom he tells them explicitly they know not. The next day after the visit of the Pharisees, as John and some of his disciples stand upon the east bank of the river near Bethlehem, or Bethany, Jesus approaches them. He advances with an air of peculiar meekness and calmness. The storm that had passed over him in the desert left him serene and placid. His gentle bearing, connected with the Baptist's previous meditations, suggests forcibly to his mind the beautiful picture of Isaiah, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter," etc.; and pointing towards him he exclaims, in hearing of John and Andrew, two of his disciples, "Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" "This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water."

Thus John the Baptist first directs the attention of the most susceptible of his own disciples to the Saviour.

As Jesus was now about to enter upon his public instructions he probably came to the theatre of the Baptist's labors, naturally expecting to find there the best preparation and starting point for his own labors.

The conduct of John is noteworthy. He is ready to give up, even his own disciples, to Jesus; and regards it as the culmination of his mission to point out to them the "Lamb of God."

The language of the Baptist shows that he had correct views of the mission of Christ. He speaks of him as a sacrificial lamb to take away sin. Doubtless there was something prophetical in this announcement which John himself but partly comprehended. Yet he seems to have understood that Christ would undergo a severe struggle with the worldly and wicked, and would in the end establish a kingdom into which the purified should be admitted.

Heretofore John had, in general terms, proclaimed a coming Messiah. Now he points to the person of Messiah, and declares, "*this is he*" of whom I spake, my successor, who is also my predecessor, and greater far than I. This testimony made a deep impression upon the minds of the two disciples of John who heard it. As Jesus turned to depart they felt an irrepressible desire to accompany him; and though too respectful to thrust themselves upon him, follow

at a distance, intimating thus their disposition. Kindly encouraged by Christ they proceed, and spend with him the remainder of the day. Whether the evening was spent at the house of a friend, or whether they had an opportunity thus early to learn that the "Son of man had not where to lay his head," we are not informed. But their intercourse with him strengthens their belief in his Messiahship. This Andrew proves immediately by seeking out his brother Simon, who was amongst the disciples of the Baptist, and bringing him to Jesus, telling him that they "have found the Messias." Looking upon Simon, Christ discerns in him the stern energy which afterwards characterized him, and tells him that he shall henceforth be called, not Simon, but Cephas or Rock.

Thus Christ collects the first rudiments of his church. Gradually these three draw the attention of others to him who had so powerfully impressed themselves; gradually they become more and more strongly attached to their new Master. And thus in obscurity and silently the new life embodies itself and becomes a society, a church, a kingdom, henceforth indestructible and destined to overturn and absorb all other kingdoms.

[John 1: 43—51.]

It is now late in the fall; the winter or rainy season is about commencing. Jesus purposes to

spend this season in Galilee, and the next day after the interview with John, Andrew, and Simon, intimates to them his intention to set out immediately for the north. They determine to accompany him, and are joined by Philip who also believes in the Messiahship of the Nazarene, and who is from Bethsaida, the "city of Andrew, Peter," and John. Philip chances to meet an old and worthy acquaintance from the village of Cana, to whom he announces his belief that Jesus, the Nazarene and son of Joseph, is he "of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write."

It seems impossible to Nathanael that Messiah can come out of Galilee. He is a candid, open hearted man, and knows the wickedness of his country. And he can recall no prediction that Nazareth should produce the Christ. Still, he is open for conviction, and accedes to the request of Philip to "go and see" the man who had so powerfully impressed his friend. As he approaches, Christ, discerning his candor and uprightness, receives him with a remark that indicated a knowledge of his character. Surprised to find himself complimented by the Nazarene as a guileless Israelite, Nathanael inquires how Jesus has received this knowledge of himself? His surprise is deepened and his belief of Christ's omniscience awakened by the answer, that before he had been called by Philip when "under the fig-tree," probably in private devotion, and sure that

no man knew it, Jesus saw him. The open hearted Nathanael is easily convinced, and despite his prejudices declares, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, and king of Israel." Jesus assures him that his incipient faith shall hereafter be confirmed by far more startling exhibitions of his knowledge and power. You shall see, said Jesus, "heaven open" for "the Son of Man;" referring to the future miracles which the disciples were destined to witness.

[John 2: 1—12.]

We hear nothing further of this little company until the third day after the above, when we find them attending a marriage festival at Cana, the place of Nathanael's home, seven miles north of Nazareth. Perhaps in part through Nathanael's influence, Jesus and his new friends are all invited to the feast. Here also Jesus meets his widowed mother with the other members of her family.

We can only guess the feelings of the mother or the Son at this meeting. Since their separation the latter had passed through new and important scenes; and the anxious mother's heart, with its great hopes and expectations, had no doubt followed her First-born.

He, as an affectionate son, no doubt confided his designs and procedure in part at least to his trusty mother. She seems at least to understand that he is about entering upon his great work. And with somewhat of a mother's zeal in the adventure of a son,—

with also somewhat of the common Jewish notion that it was a temporal throne and kingdom which her son was to establish,—she longs to see him come forth from obscurity and at once exhibit his true character and power.

Before the festival closes, an incident occurs which affords her an opportunity to suggest to Jesus her desire to see him exhibit to the guests his supernatural endowments. "The wine has failed; could you not make this the occasion to introduce yourself as Lord of nature and friend of man?" So runs the thought which Mary scarcely ventures to express; but it finds no second in Jesus. Partly in reproof he answers sternly, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" My purposes and thine lie far apart. My time for miraculous displays has not yet come; nor will it ever come for mere display.

Yet, from something in his look or tone, she seems to have surmised his design, and therefore bade the domestics obey whatever directions Jesus might give them. Though shunning display, Jesus condescends to contribute to the entertainment of the guests, by furnishing the wine, in a private, unostentatious manner. The unimpeachable testimony of a few witnesses to the reality of the miracle is secured, and thus the faith of his young disciples strengthened. But so quietly is the affair conducted that not even the master of ceremonies, who praises the wine, knows its origin. So meekly and unostentatiously does

Christ begin his astounding series of "mighty works."

We need not discuss the rank which this transaction should occupy in the series of miracles; nor answer the puerile sneers of those who cavil about the quantity and quality of the wine. Enough that it was an indisputable miracle wrought to confirm Christ's Messiahship. The occasion is worthy of peculiar remark. It was but a few days since that we saw the Anointed in the desert, treading the lonely mountains and the dens of wild beasts, oppressed with crushing thoughts, and struggling against the machinations of the prince of darkness. But the night-mare of his trial and temptations has passed. His sojourn in solitude was short; and now he comes forth, calm, cheerful, and prepared to enter freely into the social enjoyments of life. Not that his earnestness and gravity have gone. But he has nothing of moroseness, or monkish austerity; he deigns to honor and sanctify by his presence a marriage festival, and contributes to its enjoyment. He is still the amiable and cheerful person who formerly "grew in favor with God and man." His great purposes are silently cherished in the dephths of his divine heart, while he goes forth to add to the present happiness of all he meets. Such is the spirit of Christ and of Christianity,—a spirit that nourishes all pure, human affections, and seeks to refine and increase all innocent, social enjoyments,—a spirit that

enters naturally into the daily life of mankind and sanctifies all relationships and intercourse.

This incident at Cana is all that we know respecting the labors of Christ in Galilee during the first winter of his ministry. We are told that he and his mother with her family, together with the disciples who had attached themselves to him, went from Cana to Capernaum, a town lying upon the lake shore, about twenty miles north-east from Cana, in the vicinity of Bethsaida. Their stay here was short. It would seem that the time between this and the Passover, which occurred in April, was spent in the vicinity of lake Gennesaret, or sea of Galilee. Doubtless it was well employed by Christ in private intercourse with the people of the several villages of that region. Probably he found a home in the families, and among the relatives of Peter and Philip, and others who believed in his Messiahship. Nazareth seems to have had no attractions for him during this period. Probably Mary no longer had her home there. And the moral elements of the place were not as favorable for Christ's mission as could be found in other towns of Galilee.

Although Jesus had now fairly commenced his ministry, he seems not to have taken the attitude of a public preacher, until after his return from Judea, the next fall. The first year after his baptism was mostly occupied in private intercourse with individuals

or small companies. Nor did he commence preaching publicly to large congregations, until after the imprisonment of John the Baptist. By protracted, private labors and occasional miracles he laid the foundation for his more public discourses, which were at length absolutely demanded by the multitudes who thronged about him. The basis of his fame and influence was laid in the hearts of obscure individuals, and on such occasions as the evening at Bethabara with John and Andrew, the meeting with Nathanael, the unobtrusive miracle at Cana, and afterward the interview with Nicodemus, and with the woman of Samaria. The kingdom which he founds "is like a grain of mustard seed," which at first is indeed "the least of all seeds," but in time develops a mighty growth.

# PERIOD III.

## FROM THE FIRST TO THE SECOND PASS-OVER DURING CHRIST'S PUBLIC MINISTRY.

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April has come, and the waving grain tells that harvest is near. Caravans are forming throughout Palestine to go up to Jerusalem, to attend the Pass-over, and present the first sheaves to the God of the seasons.

Among the pilgrims, that wind along the valley of the Jordan from Galilee to Judea, is the earnest Jesus. He goes not as formerly silent and unobserved; he is now the man of note amongst the Galileans. Some call him a prophet; a few name him Messias. What will he do at Jerusalem? Gossip would be lively if the Galilean should come in collision with the Rabbies of the royal city. The reflective Mary remembers how he astonished those learned dignitaries, when he first attended the Pass-over, eighteen years since. But they have long since forgotten the wonderful boy.

[John 2: 13—25.]

Arrived at Jerusalem, Jesus surveys with peculiar interest his "Father's house," and all that pertains to it. With reverent step he enters its courts. His mind is full of devout meditations relative to the holy place. But how is he grieved by the profanations that he witnesses? The temple wears the appearance of a market. Instead of pious worshippers, he meets a noisy, bustling crowd of worldlings. Here he is accosted by a bantering broker; there he meets a huckster with a cage of doves; or a vendor of fat cattle for sacrifice. The idle, the curious, and the avaricious are there; but the true worshippers are few. Nowhere does he see prayer, reverence, or propriety. The beloved Son cannot see his Father thus dishonored; burning with holy zeal he begins to remonstrate. His voice rises in stern rebuke above the din of the multitude, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." His words wither the sacrilegious intruders. Raising a braided lash, emblematic of his authority, he passes along bidding them retreat. Such are his dignity and decision, and the conviction of guilt suddenly awakened in their minds by his fierce argument, that there is no resistance. As he dashes down the broker's coffer and overturns their tables, each guilty one with his litter retreats, until the courts are free, and his Father's house may be used as a "house of prayer."

The humbled Jews soon rally and demand by what authority he does these things. A prophet might introduce reforms; but "what sign showest thou" of a divine commission?

Little disposed to gratify their demand for "signs," he answers them in a prophetical enigma, containing indeed the highest sensible sign of his Messiahship, yet a sign not comprehensible until its fulfilment in his resurrection. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Christ's own person was well called the temple and dwelling place of God, as it was the highest manifestation of Deity to man. And as from the old theocracy and ruined temple were to come forth the new and spiritual, a double meaning may have been embodied in this significant though obscure "sign." Taking the remark, however, as an arrogant assertion that he could in three days do what had been nigh half a century's work for a king with royal resources, they henceforth, to the day of his crucifixion, lay it up against him.

[John 3 : 1—21.]

During the Passover Christ finds occasion to perform several striking miracles. These serve to confirm at least his high prophetical calling. Even the candid few amongst the higher and learned classes are convinced of his inspiration. Amongst them is Nicodemus, a man of candid mind and docile disposition,

who is convinced that the Messiah will soon appear and set up his kingdom. In common with others of the age he looks for a temporal kingdom into which he and all other upright Israelites shall be of course admitted.

Satisfied by the astounding miracles of Christ that he is a prophet, although looked upon with suspicion and somewhat of contempt by most of the Pharisees, Nicodemus seeks and obtains a private interview with the Galilean. Sharing the common pride and weakness of his order, he comes to Jesus in the evening that his visit may not attract attention.

The manner in which Jesus receives and entertains this first one of the influential order who comes to him is noteworthy. Human policy would say, Fasten this Pharisee; he may be of service hereafter.

But no such policy does Christ practice. He will not even gratify the curiosity of Nicodemus so much as to tell him when the new kingdom is to come. The man has a higher want than this knowledge, and Jesus regards his spiritual interests more than his curiosity or friendship.

Discerning at once that Nicodemus relies for admittance into the Messiah's kingdom upon his genealogy and punctilious morality, Christ directs his mind from the time and peculiarities of the new theocracy and his own relation to it, to the sole condition of admittance into it. You regard me as sent

of God, and would learn somewhat respecting his kingdom, for which you and the nation are looking. But know of a certainty that "except a man be born again he cannot see" that kingdom. "Born again," returns the scribe, surprised and confused at the strange sentiment, and unable for the moment to attach to it any other than a carnal meaning—"Born again; how can a man be born when he is old?" Reflection might have suggested to Nicodemus a new birth akin to what the Gentile proselytes were sometimes said to experience when circumcised and baptized into the theocracy. But the novel idea of a new birth for a Hebrew quite bewildered him.

Beginning now with an allusion to the baptism of John, which might be comprehensible to Nicodemus as the type of something higher, Christ proceeds to describe more definitely the character and efficient agent of that new birth which ever constitutes the starting point and basis of the Christian life. The carnal offspring of whatever lineage is not fit for the kingdom of God; a new generation of water and of the Spirit is necessary. The inscrutable, air-like spirit of God must work its purifying, life-giving change within the heart. The confused scribe can only ejaculate his surprise, "How can these things be?" Whereupon Christ, in his characteristic manner, proceeds to humble him for his ignorance while professedly a master in Israel, assuring him that this is but a rudimental doctrine. Moreover, Messiah is

coming in a far different manner from that in which the Jews expect him to appear. As admission into his kingdom demands a new birth, so his work will be one of humiliation rather than of glory. He is coming to save from death those who will look to him in faith. "The Son of man" shall be lifted up, as was the serpent in the wilderness, for the healing of those who love light and truth and look to him for salvation.

Thus Christ casts the seeds of Christianity into the mind of this Pharsisee, leaving them to germinate and occupy his leisure. In this brief conversation we get the first statement of that great doctrine on which the Gospel rests,—Regeneration through faith in the Son, by the mysterious inworking of the Spirit. It was appropriately given first to a man of culture and thinking habits; and its strangeness to him shows us the high origin of the doctrine.

[John 3 : 22—36.]

Having at the Passover prepared the way for a favorable reception in various quarters, since many amongst those who witnessed his miracles, "believed on him," Jesus, after the feast, goes out into the various towns of Judea with his disciples, teaching, confirming his commission by mighty works, and by proxy baptizing converts; as John the Baptist was still doing in the region of the Jordan.

About eight months, from April to December,

seem to have been spent in Judea at this visit. Respecting his works and influence we have few particulars; but one or two remarks show that Jesus was busy, and that his ministry during this period produced a great sensation. So successful was he that towards the latter part of this period the disciples of John became jealous of him, and a contention arose between them and some of the Jews who were baptized by the disciples of Christ, respecting the comparative value of the two baptisms. This sectarian controversy respecting a mere symbolical ordinance was a means of terminating this fruitful effort in Judea, as it excited the attention and suspicion of the Pharisees, and determined Christ to change the field of his labors.

The narrow-minded disciples of John, who come to their master complaining that "all men come" now to the baptism of Jesus, "to whom thou barest witness," receive but little sympathy from the Baptist. John knows full well that his mission is short, and that he must be lost in the radiance of that brighter sun that is now rising. Christ's success, he tells them, is a proof that God is with him. At the same time he reminds them that he ever disclaimed Messiahship, assuring them that he is only a herald and attendant of the real bridegroom to whom the church belongs; and that he greatly rejoices in the voice of his friend and master. To introduce the bridegroom, Christ, to the theocracy, his bride was

my mission, and it is ended. Henceforth "he must increase, but I must decrease." These words are accompanied with still higher attestations of Christ's inspiration and divinity.

This prediction of his own speedy decline may have been based in part upon the evident signs of the times. Not only was Jesus attracting greater attention now than John, but the latter knew that the profligate Herod and his minions were already plotting his ruin. The stern preacher of repentance could not fail to incur the hatred of a corrupt court.

A few days after this the faithful herald was seized by Herod's orders and imprisoned. Henceforth he pines lonely and disconsolate in the fortress of Machærus, away up by the desolate mountains of Moab.

[Matt. 4: 12; 14: 3—5; Mark 1: 14; 6: 17—20; Luke 4: 14; 3: 19—20; John 4: 1—42.]

Hearing of the imprisonment of John and the jealousy of the Pharisees towards himself, Christ now resolves to retire from Judea, and again spend the winter in Galilee.

The Samaritans were at this time expecting the advent of Messiah, and were free from many of the prejudices which hindered the progress of truth in the minds of the Jews. Jesus, free from the bigotry which separated Jews and Samaritans, and perhaps desiring to give his disciples an example of liberal-

mindedness, resolves to take the shorter route to Galilee, through Samaria.

Late in the month of November, on a certain day about noon, a woman of the city of Sychar or Shechem, comes out to Jacob's well, "about three hundred paces south-east of the city," to draw water. Approaching she sees a man, evidently a travelling Jew, weary and soiled, reclining by the well. To her surprise the mild stranger asks her for a drink. You a Jew and ask drink of me, a Samaritan, responds the woman. Diverting her mind from the subject of their diversity and national prejudices, with that rare tact which he often exhibited, he turns it to the contemplation of spiritual things. Under the figure of a living fountain he tells her of the salvation which he alone can give. Having excited her curiosity and gained her confidence, he convinces her that he is a prophet, by declaring to her a few facts of her private history, such as a stranger could only know by supernatural means. Perceiving that he is a prophet she naturally falls back upon the old theme of contention between Jews and Samaritans, the relative claims of Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Zion, as places of worship—"Our fathers worshipped here, on this" fertile Gerizim that looks so smilingly down upon us, "Ye say that Jerusalem is the place" to worship. His answer is characteristic of his whole manner. Alluding to the rejection of prophecy by the Samaritans, and to the development of divine

truth and the Messianic idea amongst the Jews, he gives the preference to the latter, but makes this only a preamble for the presentation of the spirituality of that worship which is henceforth to be offered to God. Salvation shall spring out of Zion; but the time is coming, and come, when the true worshippers shall be confined to no prescribed locality. Both Gerizim and Jerusalem are superseded by a higher dispensation. God's worship shall no more consist in altar-forms and rites. The time of pilgrimages and periodical convocations and emblematical ceremonies is past. Henceforth the Father seeks such as worshippers who worship "in spirit and in truth." Not in spirit alone, as mere visionaries and mystics. Not in truth alone, by mere intellectualisms; but in spirit and in truth. By a spiritual communion with God through the truth; by a participation of the divine life which is truth and spirit, may man everywhere find a temple and approach unto the Most High. True worship is the homage of a truthful spirit wherever that homage be offered.

Thus Christ calmly announces to this poor woman the highest truth of religion, and at once sweeps away the formalisms of the world. The woman, deeply impressed by his discourse, hastens back to the city to tell the people that she has found the Christ.

Meantime, the disciples, who had gone into the city to obtain food, have returned and stand in silent

wonder to see their Master converse with a Samaritan woman. Upon her departure, they spread out their purchase, and ask him to partake. But his mind is absorbed with the high theme of which he has been discoursing, and the contemplation of that great work which lies before him, and the faint beginning of which, on foreign soil, has just been made in the mind of this woman. The weariness, faintness, and hunger which he had experienced, are forgotten in these earnest thoughts. He excuses himself from eating, telling his urgent disciples that he has other food, of which they know not; that it is his meat to do the will and complete the work of him that sent him. The thought of that work presses heavily upon him. He sees that these Samaritans are already prepared to receive Christianity. The whole world is waiting for Him or his Gospel. Though but seed-time in the natural world, the spiritual world is whitening for the harvest. Glancing forward, however, into the great future, and contemplating his own early death, to occur before the work be scarce begun, he feels that he is but sowing seed, the fruits of which others may reap. Yet sower and reaper are one, and may at last rejoice together.

At the solicitation of the Samaritans, who came in crowds at the call of the woman, Jesus remains two days in Samaria, sowing that seed, of which the Apostles afterwards reaped the fruit. So open-hearted were the Samaritans, that, although no miracles were

performed amongst them, many believed in his Messiahship, convinced by his words and demeanor that he was indeed "the Saviour of the world."

[John 4: 43—45; Matt. 4: 17; Mark 1: 14—15; Luke 4: 14—15.]

Leaving Samaria, Jesus proceeded into Galilee, where he was generally well received. The Galileans seem to have at this time exhibited much of that enthusiasm which an inferior people are wont to manifest, when one of their countrymen has obtained notoriety abroad. They had no definite views of his Messiahship, but they had seen him at Jerusalem surpass the pretensions of the Hierarchy, and had heard of his wonderful works. In his native town, Nazareth alone, as would be anticipated, the fame of Jesus bred envy and contempt. Hence he avoided the place until his reputation was elsewhere firmly established.

Of Christ's labors and experience during the succeeding months, from December to April, we have but a few fragmentary records. From these we learn, that he now entered the synagogue as a public teacher, and itinerated through the towns of Galilee, "Preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the Gospel." And as his preaching was accompanied with acts of charity and miraculous physical agency in behalf of the suffering, he was "glorified of all."

It is noteworthy that only one miracle had been performed in Galilee until Christ's present mission; and that the next miracle was wrought in the same village as the first. Perhaps the transformation of water at the marriage had wrought favorably upon the people of Cana; or the residence of friends in that place may have drawn Jesus thither upon his return from Judea.

[John 4: 46—54.)

It is soon rumored about Galilee that Christ has returned, and is at Cana. A man of rank and political consequence at Capernaum, twenty miles northeast from Cana, whose son is dangerously ill, hears that Jesus is in that place, and immediately starts to find him, and, if possible, bring him to Capernaum to heal his child. This man has a faith in the power of Christ to heal diseases, but he is driven by affliction to seek him, not by any consciousness of his spiritual wants. The Gallileans had not the open-heartedness of the Samaritans. They would not believe because of the *words* of Jesus. Hence he says to the nobleman, with somewhat of rebuke, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." A truth-hardened people are less susceptible than Samaritans or Pagans.

The anxiety of the nobleman was to secure something like a physician's visit. "Sir, come down ere my child die." Jesus did not hold himself subject to

such calls; yet he saw in the Capernaan a susceptibility for spiritual impressions, and resolved to heal his son. He would do it, however, in a manner calculated to develop the munificence of his power, and to awaken a deeper faith. To the earnest entreaty of the nobleman, he calmly replies, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." But there is an emphasis in this calm utterance that quiets the anxiety of the father; he silently departs believing the word of the great physician. On the way his servants meet him with the joyful news of his son's convalescence. Upon careful enquiry, it appears that "the fever left him at the same hour in which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth." It now appears not only that Jesus can heal diseases, but that he is independent of time and space. He can exert his healing power in a moment, and upon an invalid twenty miles distant, whom he had probably never seen, as efficiently as if he were beside him. As a result of this miracle, the nobleman and his whole household believe, and a favorable opening is made in Capernaum for Christ's future labors and residence.

[Luke 4: 16—31; Matt. 4: 13—16.]

Before going to Capernaum, Jesus returned to traverse once more the vale, and climb the hills which had been the haunts of his youth. The Nazarenes were full of curiosity. The fame of their citizen had reached them, and had awakened a desire to

hear him and to witness some of his mighty works. Consequently, when upon the sabbath he appeared in the synagogue, in the teacher's place, all eyes were upon him.

As he proceeded to read and expound the beautiful prediction of his own mission, contained in the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah, they listened with wonder and admiration. But it was an idle wonder. None of them realized their own need of the spiritual deliverance predicted by Isaiah, and offered to them in the person of Jesus; no one asked for his healing mercy for either spiritual or bodily infirmity. Christ discovered no susceptibility in them for a true faith. They were eager for a sign, and determined that he should gratify their carnal curiosity; but this was all.

In accordance with his character, Christ rebuked their carnal desire of supernatural signs, refused to work a miracle to gratify their curiosity, and by citations from sacred history showed them that the gifts and graces of God are dispensed, not indiscriminately, but here and there according to divine wisdom. Moreover, he tells them, "No prophet is accepted in his own country, intimating that he does not look for a just appreciation from them, and that it would be vain to exhibit to them the evidences of his divine commission.

This sudden frustration of their expectations arouses their malignity, and, under pretence of punishing a false prophet, they furiously urge Jesus to a

precipice south-west of the city, determined to cast him down. "But he," in the simple, yet significant words of the evangelist, "passing through the midst of them, went his way."

Leaving Nazareth, Jesus took up his residence, so far as he had a residence, at Capernaum. Some time was now spent in that vicinity, and a deep impression made upon the minds of many. We are told that the people pressed around him in crowds "to hear the word of God." Thus he began the fulfilment of Isaiah's prediction, that the land of Zebulon and Naphtali, "the people that walked in darkness" and dwelt "in the land of the shadow of death," should see "a great light."

[Luke 5: 1—11; Matt. 4: 18—22; Mark 1: 16—20.]

An incident occurred here of peculiar interest, because of its influence in confirming the faith and attachment of several of the disciples of Jesus; though to us the miraculous element of the event is less striking than that exhibited upon some other occasions.

Early one day, as Jesus was walking along the lake shore, a crowd of listeners gathered about him, eager to hear him discourse. Peter and Andrew, and their partners Zebedee and his sons, who had been toiling as fishermen all night upon the lake, had drawn up their boats upon the shore, and were washing and repairing their nets.

Entering Peter's boat and requesting him to shove off a few paces from land, Jesus sat upon the boat in the still morning, and preached to the people on shore.

Having ended his address, he bids Peter launch out into deep water and let down his net. The fruitless toil of the night, as well as the direction to launch out into deep water where success was never expected, gave Peter no encouragement. But he was deeply impressed with reverence for Jesus, and therefore replies, notwithstanding the discouragements, "at thy word I will let down the net." And no sooner has he obeyed than, to the astonishment of himself and his companion, the net is filled so as to be unmanageable. The other boat and its crew are called, and each vessel returns to the shore laden with fish to its utmost capacity.

Contemplating this astonishing draught, and feeling that only a miraculous providence could have secured it, the emotions of Peter become indescribable. It seems to him that the immaculate God has come down into his rude vessel; and at once self shrinks away, he feels how mean are man and earth before the Most Holy; and cries out, as one infected, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

The feelings of Peter are also experienced by Andrew and by the sons of Zebedee; their faith in the divine mission of Christ is confirmed; and as he proceeds to invite them into closer relationship to

himself, promising that henceforth, as his ambassadors, they shall become "fishers of men," gather souls into his kingdom, they leave all and follow him. Henceforth they are inseparably joined to Christ.

The miraculous "draught of fishes" doubtless had a peculiar impressiveness to those men, which it has not for others. Men are more deeply affected by a supernatural occurrence in their own pursuits, and on familiar ground, than by a distant though greater marvel.

The fame of Christ now spread rapidly, as his surprising works increased. Capernaum became the centre of "a great light," and the stage on which were wrought "many mighty works."

The achievements of a single sabbath, as recorded by the evangelists, will give us a conception of the amazing rapidity and seeming ease with which Christ executed the most stupendous deeds.

[Mark 1: 21—28; Luke 4: 31—37.]

The sabbath following the discourse by the sea side, Jesus as usual preached to the people of Capernaum in the synagogue.

In the congregation was one of those most wrecked and wretched of men called demoniacs; men who seemed to bear in their tormented souls and shattered intellects, as well as distressed bodies, the ripest fruits of degradation and sin; men who believed themselves given up for the habitation of devils, and who were

supposed to have forfeited to demons the control of their own faculties and organs. The authoritative manner in which Jesus propounded his pure doctrines and divine precepts aroused the spirit of evil in this demoniac, and starting up, at length, he cried out as one in anguish, "Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." The shuddering and wrathful outbreak of this demoniac perhaps interrupted the discourse of our Lord, but did not disturb his equanimity. Conscious that he was indeed the "Holy One of God," he fixed his calm, commanding eye upon the maniac, saying to the spirit of evil that rioted in him, "Be still, and come out of him." Hearing this, the demoniac with one wild scream plunged headlong "in the midst;" and with that fierce convulsion his madness passed away. "What thing, or what new doctrine is this?" say the astonished spectators; "for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him." And forth, as on the wings of the wind, flies the rumor of this miracle. Each member of the dispersing congregation is a herald of the power of Jesus.

[Matt. 8: 14—17; Mark 1: 29—34; Luke 4: 38—41.]

Leaving the synagogue, Jesus and his four disciples, the fishermen, enter the house of Peter, whose mother-in-law lies there severely "sick of a fever."

Learning her condition, the compassionate Physician approaches, takes her by the hand, and anon the burning heat is gone; a bracing coolness is in that touch; the prostrate woman revives, arises, is well, and proceeds to assist in the preparation of a meal for the family and their guests.

Meantime the report of the demoniac's cure has spread through the city, and preparations are making in every afflicted family to carry their sick to the healer.

The sabbath may not be infringed upon; but anxiously the sinking sun is watched, and when at length the last beam fades from the city, and the legal sabbath ends, restraint is done. From almost every door issue the crowd, eagerly thronging to Peter's house. The sick and infirm, of every disease, come with tottering steps, or are borne on litters by their friends. Demoniacs of every type, some quiet and dumb, and others in raving madness, crying out, at the sight of Jesus, "Thou art Christ the Son of God.": friends of the sick and possessed, and with them the wonder-loving multitude of every age and class assemble, until "all the city is gathered together at the door." It is a sea of heads around the fisherman's domicil, into which they can not come; and out and through the multitude passes the "Good Physician," laying "his hands upon every one" of the diseased, and healing them, and "with his word" casting out the evil spirits of all the demoniacs.

Numbers are not given, but they were "many." Such a scene, and such an evening's work as that about Peter's house, had never before been seen on earth. Miracle crowds upon miracle till the astonished mind is overcome, and sinks exhausted in the contemplation.

[Mark 1 : 35—39 ; Luke 4 : 42—44.]

Mere human agents, after great achievements, usually sink exhausted and lie dormant for a time. Mere human workers also expect to enjoy the triumph and adulation generally accorded by enthusiastic spectators of their labors; but neither of these experiences follow here. We learn that the next day after the above labors, Jesus rises up "a great while before day." No respite after toil. The most plodding citizen is not abroad so early as he. And for what? Away in solitude communing with God, the excited city, though early astir, can not find him. Grateful citizens would tender him thanks and honors; admiring nobleman would tender him the freedom of the city. But the man of wonder is missing. Not at Peter's house, not in the synagogue, not any where can he be found.

At last, "in a desert place," the disciples find him in secret devotion. The desert place is soon thronged; the people entreat him not to leave their city; but he has no time to enjoy their hospitality and honors. "I must preach the kingdom of God unto other cities

also, for therefore am I sent," is his brief reply to their entreaties. And immediately he sets out to visit and preach in all the cities and towns of Galilee. He goes as an humble evangelist, scattering everywhere the seeds of heavenly truth, "and healing all manner of sicknesses, and all manner of diseases among the people."

[Matt. 4 : 23—25.]

His miraculous cures were now the principal means of attracting followers. So rapidly did his reputation spread, that he was followed by multitudes wherever he went. Every district of Palestine and Syria heard of him, and, in the brief and pregnant words of Matthew, "They brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan."

Never before had Galilee been the center of such attractions, or called pilgrims from distant provinces.

[Matt. 8 : 2—4; Mark 1 : 40—45; Luke 5 : 12—16.]

Of the particulars of his labors in other towns of Galilee than Capernaum during this period, only a single instance is given; and the name of the city

where that occurred is not mentioned. Particular mention is made of this case, the healing of a leper, perhaps because it was the first cure of a disease of this kind; or because of the supposed incurableness of the disease by any but miraculous means. No class of men are so utterly shut out from the sympathy and society of mankind as the lepers. Few are willing even so much as to touch one of these wretched objects. But having heard of the benignity and power of Christ, a distressed leper in a certain city came to him "kneeling down, and saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." "Moved with compassion," and approving the humble faith of the man, Jesus "put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean."

The multitudes that thronged the Saviour had now begun to be oppressive, and the labors exacted of him intolerable. The wonder and protestations of admiration made were also no doubt repugnant to him. Hence he bids the leper depart in silence and make the offering directed by Moses in case of a cure of this disease, and obtain a certificate of the cure from the priest.

But the grateful and happy leper could not be silent respecting his deliverer, and the fame of Jesus seemed to spread the more rapidly when he sought to avoid notoriety. The multitude continued to increase till he was obliged to renounce the city and seek retirement in the desert. But even there they would

search him out and gather "about him from every quarter."

[Mark 2: 1—12; Luke 5: 17—26; Matt. 9: 2—8.]

After an excursion of some weeks through various parts of Galilee, spent as above described, Jesus again returned to Capernaum. Scribes and Pharisees from other towns in Galilee, and even from Jerusalem and Judea, had congregated here to see and hear him. It being reported that he had entered a certain house where some of these dignitaries were, a congregation soon assembled, and he as usual preached to them the word.

During his discourse, four men, bearing a parlytic upon a litter, endeavored to gain admittance, in order to secure the healing of the invalid; but the press had become too great; access even to the door was impossible.

The men at length found their way to the roof of the building (probably by passing from the roofs of adjacent buildings), removed part of the roof, and swung down the invalid on his couch before the preacher.

Seeing their faith, he paused in his discourse, and said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee."

This expression implied a close connection between physical suffering and moral evil. Probably there was a conviction in the mind of the invalid that his suf-

fering was the result of vice. If not, the remark of Jesus was calculated to produce such a conviction. He saw that the man's heart should first be healed, and gave him the solace which he most needed.

But the captious Scribes and Pharisees found in Christ's remark a pretext for censure and opposition. "Who is this speaking blasphemies?" say they: "who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Perceiving their disaffection, Christ proceeds to prove to them that he has "power on earth to forgive sins, by performing a physical cure for the invalid. They might deny that the man's sins were forgiven; but when the paralytic, in obedience to Christ's command, takes up his couch and walks before them, denial is at an end. The astonished multitude disperse, "glorifying God, and saying, we have seen strange things to day." The voice that could thus restore the palsied limbs of a sinner, could not be guilty of blasphemy. If he forgives sins, they are forgiven.

Note here that Christ tacitly admitted their assertion, that none but God could forgive sins. Hence his assertion of forgiveness was a virtual assumption of divinity.

[Matt. 9: 9; Mark 2: 13, 14; Luke 5: 27, 28.]

Shortly after the above, Jesus preached to a multitude of people out by the sea shore, near Capernaum. There he received into the circle of his intimate disciples, the publican, Matthew, or Levi, whom he found

at the custom-house, and who had probably before believed in Jesus.

In such labors, preaching the doctrine of the kingdom of God, and confirming his divine commission by numerous indisputable miracles, Christ occupied the time until the next passover.

Here ends the record of his present sojourn in Galilee. He will be found next at Jerusalem.

# PERIOD IV.

## FROM THE SECOND PASSOVER TO THE THIRD.

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THE tribes of Israel have again assembled at Jerusalem to attend the solemn feast. Every place of interest in the city is thronged by pilgrims. The pool of Bethesda has as usual its multitude of invalids watching for the moving of its celebrated waters. Whether they possessed a mineral or a miraculous virtue, we need not enquire. Suffice it, that here were gathered the infirm and "impotent folk."

[John 5 : 1—47.]

It might be anticipated that he who went about doing good and preaching to the poor would be found visiting such a resort. Accordingly, we learn that during the feast, Jesus discovered amongst the impotent multitude, which filled the porches around the pool, one forlorn and helpless man, who had not even a friend to help him into the water, at the propitious

moment. Touched with pity, the friend of the friendless kindly addresses the poor man, listens to his sad story, and then, in his inimitable tone replies, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk." The surprised invalid feels a new life and vigor thrilling through his hitherto helpless limbs. Wondering and delighted he stands up, grasps his couch, and leaves the place a strong and healthy man.

Seeing him thus posting off with his couch, the punctilious Jews hail and reproach him for desecrating the sabbath, by bearing such a burden. His reply is, that the man who cured him bade him do it. But who that may be he can not tell. The merciful stranger has disappeared in the crowd.

Afterward, while in the temple, to which he had appropriately resorted, we may suppose to give thanks for his cure, Jesus again met him and gave him some pious advice. Learning who the stranger is, he reports to the Jews that "it was Jesus who made him whole."

The leaders of the Jews, envious and jealous of Christ's popularity, were already anxious for some pretext on which to oppose and persecute him. The assumption of divinity which he had made when healing the paralytic at Capernaum, suggested the charge of blasphemy. The present cure wrought upon the sabbath was seized upon as the basis of a new charge, that of sabbath breaking; and open persecution was at once proclaimed against the Galilean. In reply to

their accusation of sabbath breaking, Jesus repudiates their formalistic view of the sabbath, telling them, that as God the Father ever works with ceaseless activity, so also will he continue his work of healing mercy, even on the sabbath. That he labors in unity with God, doing nothing of himself, but as a Son imitating the Father.

This assertion of his relationship to God is taken as another expression of blasphemy; their hatred is inflamed, and they determined upon his death. But their rage serves only to call out one of those pungent discourses, full of divine wisdom and incontrovertible argument, with which he was wont to demolish cavillers. The purport of his discourse on the present occasion is, that he, as Messiah and Son of God, does, and will do, the works of God. They shall yet see him perform greater marvels than he has yet achieved. For the Father has committed to him life-giving power, to quicken whom he will, whether physically or spiritually. To him is also committed the judgment of the world, that "all men should honor him as they honor the Father." Through faith in the Son, alone, says he, can men secure justification and everlasting life. Even the dead in their graves shall receive from this Messiah their final judgment and awards, life or damnation. Nor is the evidence of my Messiahship impeachable. John the Baptist has borne his testimony, and for a while you rejoiced in his shining light. But I appeal not to him or to any man. The works

that I do in my Father's name are my credentials. God has borne witness for me, both in his word and in my miracles. And the reason that you do not receive his testimony is, because you have no spiritual affinity for his revelations; you judge only by the carnal sense; you rest in the mere letter of the word and wait for tangible signs such as God does not give.

In short, you "have not the love of God in you," you are selfish and ambitious, and ready to follow impostors. Professing to believe in Moses, you are not ready to receive me of whom Moses wrote, when I come in the Father's name seeking a spiritual kingdom, and disregarding your selfish and ambitious projects. Thus Christ unqualifiedly asserts his own equality with God, presents to them the irrefragable proof of his Messiahship, and exposes their selfishness, blindness, and infidelity.

Leaving those barbed arrows in their hearts, he soon after leaves the city and region, and returns to Galilee, where he could more quietly pursue his ministry. Henceforth, however, we shall find his steps closely dogged and every word and action scrutinized by emissaries of the hostile party, at the head of which are the Pharisees.

[Matt. 12: 1—8; Mark 2: 23—28; Luke 6; 1—5.]

An incident that occurred the following sabbath shows that, although prudently withdrawing from personal danger, Jesus by no means repressed truth, or

changed his course of procedure, to avoid giving offence and ground of accusation to his enemies.

On the way back to Galilee, accompanied by his disciples, they had occasion on the sabbath to pass through a wheat-field. The disciples were hungry, and began to rub out in their hands and eat of the wheat, it being about harvest time.

Some of the Pharisees in attendance complain to Jesus that his disciples are thus transgressing the law of the sabbath. Taking up this complaint as directed virtually against himself, he shows them from the example of David and of the priests in the temple-service, that the law does not require under all circumstances a slavish submission to the letter; but that considerations of mercy may justify a transgression of the general requisition. All labor is not necessarily forbidden, regardless of circumstances. God prefers the exercise of mercy to any external, ritualistic service. Moreover, the Son of Man, out of regard for whom the disciples are reduced to such want, is superior to the temple and the old dispensation, and "Lord even of the sabbath," and could legalize their procedure.

Such expositions of the true spirit of the law, independent of the letter, show us how Christ outstripped the exegesis of his age and penetrated to the divine significance of the word.

[Matt. 12: 9—14; Mark 3: 1—6; Luke 6: 6—11.]

An incident kindred to the above occurred a few

sabbaths afterward in a synagogue in Galilee, where Jesus was preaching.

A man with a palsied hand was presented to him, while certain Pharisees in the congregation were zealously watching for another ground of accusation.

Anticipating their objection, Christ bids the afflicted man stand forth before them, and turning to the congregation enquires as if for information, whether it is "lawful to do good on the sabbath-day, or to do evil? to save life or to kill?" When all remain speechless he proceeds, who of you that should have a sheep fall into a pit upon the sabbath, would not "lay hold on it and lift it out?" They are silent still, and he utters the inference to which their silence gave assent, that "it is lawful to do well on the sabbath," to exercise acts of mercy to the suffering. Then turning to the man he says, "Stretch forth thine hand! And he stretched it forth, and it was restored whole, like as the other."

This incident fairly enraged the Pharisees, who began to plot henceforth with the Herodians, who were also becoming jealous of him, for the destruction of Jesus.

[Matt 12: 15—21; Mark 3: 7—12.)

Aware of their designs, the persecuted Saviour left again the thronged city and retired to the lake shore. But retirement was now almost impossible. So great was his reputation, and so enthusiastic the

mass of the people to see and hear him, that the most solitary place grew populous as soon as he resorted to it. Reaching the lake of Gennessaret he is soon surrounded by an immense multitude of people, gathered from all Palestine. Some sick, others lame, others infected with the plague or possessed with devils, all press forward eager but to touch him, in order to share his healing virtue. Add to these multitudes of the curious and wonder-loving flocking from all Galilee, from Jerusalem and Judea, even from Perea and Idumea on the south, and from Tyre and Sidon on the north. And still they come, though he strictly charges those who are healed not to speak of it, or make him known, until he is fairly crowded from the land and obliged to seek safety from the pressure of the multitude, as also from the machinations of enemies, by pushing out in a boat upon the lake.

Anchored a short distance from the shore, upon which the enthusiastic multitude are gathered, the fishing-boat of a disciple secures the benignant Son of Mary, while he pours out his heavenly discourse, and heals the sufferers who crowd to the water's edge to receive his blessing.

In such peaceful and defenceless guise, as Isaiah had predicted, the beloved Son and servant of God, bearing the Father's Spirit, neither striving nor crying in the street, breaking no bruised reed, quenching no smoking wick, but dispensing light and salvation and sending forth "judgment unto victory," pursued his

sacred ministry. Thus sought after by the poor and needy, and persecuted by the rich and powerful, he passed homeless and destitute from city to city, from town to desert, from land to sea, "preaching the Gospel of the kingdom," and bearing "our infirmities."

Mark 3 : 13—19 ; Luke 6 : 12—19 ; Matt. 10 : 2—4.]

The arduous and increasing labors of Christ may have had some influence in prompting him about this time to select and formally appoint the twelve Apostles to be his helpers, and to extend his Gospel. Doubtless the selection and special training of a select band of followers to succeed him in his ministry entered into Christ's original plan. And with reference to this design he had probably heretofore taken peculiar pains to draw more closely to himself the more susceptible of his hearers, such as Peter, John, and others, who early became attached to him.

But the time had now come to receive more formally a number of these persons into more intimate relationship, and to inform them of his wishes and expectations. It was needful for them to receive peculiar instructions and discipline in order to be prepared for the work to which they were destined; such instruction as could not be communicated publicly to large and mixed assemblies. Christ also desired, as soon as they could be qualified, to send them forth to preach and work miracles, in order the more widely to extend his mission before his own departure.

And a number of persons had now followed him long and closely enough to enable him, on natural principles, to judge of their qualifications and fitness to become apostles.

The process of ordination or appointment took place upon a mountain near Capernaum, after a night spent in prayer by our Lord in the same place. Out of a large number of followers he selected twelve; a significant number amongst the Hebrews, and a convenient number for his purpose. Precisely upon what grounds the choice was made in each individual case we do not know. There were some marked characters, such as Peter and John, who were peculiarly endowed by nature for the office. But as a whole, the twelve were in no respect peculiar, except in their attachment to Jesus.

With Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Nathanael or Bartholomew, and Matthew, we are already acquainted as friends of Christ. Of Thomas, James, son of Alpheus, Thaddeus or Judas, brother of James, Simon of Cana, and Judas Iscariot, we shall hear more hereafter.

Jesus might certainly have secured more learned and influential men for his apostles. He had friends and followers of rank and high attainments. But he seems to have preferred those who had nothing to recommend them save their simplicity of heart and devotion to him as Messiah. Probably such men, unbiased

by any learned theories, and destitute of any civil ambition, were more fit organs for the reception and promulgation of the spiritual doctrines which Christ desired to publish, than any other class of men would have been. It may also have entered into the divine plan to exercise no supernatural foresight respecting the character and future career of the men selected, but to take out of the common walks of life a band of men possessing the common variety of character and talent, out of which enough worthy persons would at least be found to testify to Christ's character, work and doctrines, and constitute the nucleus of a true church of God. After christianity had been introduced by such unsuspicious men, guided evidently by a divine Spirit, a learned Paul could be called and inspired to expound the sublime doctrines of the system. Such, indeed, appears to have been the Saviour's plan.

The choice of the twelve took place early in the morning, when only the more intimate of Christ's friends were with him. But as the day advanced, a multitude, as usual, began to collect about him. Upon descending to the plain after the above transaction, the crowd increased; friends and enemies, acquaintances and strangers, from every direction, the healthy, the sick, and the demoniacal, all pressed toward the man of wonder, desiring "to touch him; for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all."

[Matt. 5 : 1—48 ; Matt. 6 : 1—8 ; Matt. 6 : 15—34 ; Matt. 7 : 1—29 ; Matt. 8 : 1 ; Luke 6 : 20—49.]

Having healed the infirm among them, Christ again took a more elevated position upon the hill side, and delivered to the assembled multitude his longest recorded discourse, called the Sermon on the Mount.

The objects of this discourse were to unfold the true idea of the Messiah's kingdom, in contrast with the false conceptions of the Jews ; to refute the accusation made against Christ, that he was opposed to the old dispensation ; and to impress upon the disciples the kind of life and spirit which they would be required to exhibit, the principles upon which they should act, and the difficulties they should encounter.

As the apostles had just been appointed, and false representations of Christ's principles combined with fierce persecution had first arisen amongst the Pharisees, a discourse of this kind was specially pertinent at that time.

Matthew and Luke report the discourse with immaterial variations ; Luke omitting some passages, and Matthew incorporating into it some kindred sentiments that were uttered by the Saviour upon other occasions.

A brief outline of the argument and divisions of this most clear and practical exposition of the principles of Christianity is all that can be here presented.

The beatitudes with which the discourse opens set

forth the moral requisitions for acceptance with God, the blessings secured by the graces of character proposed, and the relations of the people of God to the world.

The humble, meek, peaceful, merciful, and upright, who yearn for righteousness, and who are subject to the contempt and persecution of the world, are the true heirs of the kingdom of God.

They are also in reality the light and salt of earth, the true guardians and conservators of human society. Their office is to shine into and irradiate a darkened world.

This they should do by the exhibition of a life strictly conformed to the spirit of the divine law. Hence it was not true that Christ opposed the law, as the Pharisees declared. His object was rather to fulfil the old dispensation; he came to free it from dead formalism and to introduce that spirit of life which alone fulfils the law; and he enjoins upon his followers a far higher obedience than was practised by the strictest formalist. He presents the law not in its cramped political form, but as the eternal standard of the inner moral life.

For example, the law in its civil form forbids the overt acts of murder, adultery, and perjury, but as the rule of Christian life, it takes cognizance of the heart and condemns the disposition that would, if cherished, lead to such exhibitions. The theocratic law tolerated divorce; Christ unfolds the indissolubility of the

marriage covenant. The Mosaic law enjoined the love of one's neighbor, but admitted such an interpretation as tolerated hatred of foreigners and revenge upon enemies. Christ bids us love our enemies, and suffer wrong rather than retaliate. He bids us pray for persecutors, and return blessings for curses. Like our Father, God, we should be guided by the law of love.

This exposition of the true spirit of obedience is followed by a contrast between true religion and the hypocritical, false piety of the Pharisees. They give alms, pray, and fast with a vain and selfish ostentation. True religion demands that these duties be performed in humility, simplicity of heart, and secrecy. They are severe in their judgment of others, but indulgent to self. A really pious man judges charitably of others and rigidly of himself. Hence the golden rule, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." Judge of others and act toward them as you would desire to have them do toward you, if placed in their circumstances.

Next follow various injunctions for guarding, testing, and regulating the spiritual life.

Care must be taken to enter at the strait gate. The way to heaven is not broad and frequented by the multidude; deceivers and false guides must be shunned. Principle and the daily life, not mere profession, furnish the only sure test of piety.

The heart and affections must be devoted to God,

and the soul's treasure be above. Singleness of aim and entire devotion should mark the Christian. God and Mammon can not be served at the same time.

An humble and filial trust in Providence should lead us to discard all anxiety about the enjoyments of life, to seek first the kingdom of God, and for earthly comforts trust Him who feeds the birds of the air and decks the lilies of the field. Unto that heavenly Father he bids us approach with child-like confidence. Sooner will an earthly parent give stones and serpents to the child that cries for bread, than God withhold any real good from them who knock at his door and ask his favors. Yet remember that a spirit of obedience must accompany your petitions.

In conclusion, Christ draws a contrast between the final destinies of those who listen to and practice these his precepts, and those who treat them with neglect. The one class builds upon the immovable rock, the other upon the shifting sands which shall be washed away by the overwhelming floods.

Thus ends this masterly exhibition of the spirit of Christianity, in contrast with Jewish legalism, and as the complete development of the principles of the Old Testament. To the attentive multitude it was a new and sublime revelation, much unlike the discourses of the scribes.

After the discourse, Jesus descended from the hill and advanced towards Capernaum, attended by the delighted multitudes who had listened to his sermon.

[Matt. 8: 5—13; Luke 7: 1—10.]

As they entered the city they were met by a delegation of the elders of the Jews, who entreated him to go to the house of a centurion and heal a servant who was dangerously ill, and for whom the centurion had a peculiar affection.

This centurion, though a foreigner, had endeared the people of the town by his kind demeanor and his contributions for the support of their religion. Hesitating to go himself to Christ, on account of his alienship and pagan connection, he sought the mediation of Jews of influence to secure a visit from the great Healer. He seems to have had no doubt of Christ's power, but felt a peculiar diffidence and unworthiness to be honored by such a visit.

When, therefore, it was announced to him that Jesus was coming to his house, he became agitated and afraid that he had asked too much. Going hastily out to meet him, he declared his consciousness of his unworthiness to receive Christ under his roof, and asked that the Saviour would but "speak the word" only, and his servant would be healed. Christ had shown that Spirits were subject to him. The centurion regarded this as proof of his divinity, and hence suggested that Christ should by the agency of some ministering spirit perform the cure. I have servants who do my bidding; let some servant of yours perform this work for me. I am not worthy to be served by you in person.

Christ, discerning a true humility and sincerity in the man, and impressed by such an exhibition of faith in a foreigner, turned to his followers and assured them that he had not found such an instance amongst all the Israelites. Looking upon this as significant of the unbelief of the Jews and the readiness of many pagans to receive the gospel, he proceeds with a prophetic intimation that aliens from every clime would be introduced into the divine kingdom; while the Hebrews, in their self-sufficiency, should be cast out.

Then turning to the centurion he says, "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour."

This was the second miracle performed in Capernaum upon persons at a distance who were the dependents of foreigners, and under circumstances utterly precluding the use of any natural agencies.

[Luke 7 : 11—17.]

The next day after the above events Jesus set out upon another excursion into other parts of Galilee. We hear of him at Nain, a town near Mt. Tabor, about twenty miles south-west from Capernaum. As usual at this period of his ministry, a large company attends him.

Approaching the town, they are met by a large funeral procession. A weeping widow follows to the grave her only son. Touched by her grief, the

Saviour says to her, "Weep not." Then he stops the bearers, and touching the bier cries out, "Young man, arise!" To the amazement of the spectators, the corpse starts up, begins to speak, and the young man, restored to life and health, is presented to his mother. The wondering people "glorify God, saying, that a great prophet is risen up amongst us." That a stranger should thus, from regard to a bereaved mourner, suddenly stop a funeral procession, and, unsolicited, and with no material appliances, yet with unwavering confidence, command the dead to arise, and be instantly obeyed, was to them sufficient proof "that God had visited his people."

[Matt. 11 : 2—19 ; Luke 7 : 18—35.]

While Jesus was thus humbly traversing the obscure regions of Galilee, and preaching his gospel to the poor and uninfluential, laying the foundation for a spiritual church, but making no public or political demonstrations, there was one earnest mind waiting and longing to hear of him at the head of the theocracy, clothed in regal dignity.

John the Baptist, who had been permitted to introduce Jesus as the Messiah, shared the common Jewish expectation that Christ would assume temporal authority. Aware that his own public career was run, and believing that the greater prophet whom he proclaimed had entered the field, he anticipated a speedy change in the aspect of the theocratic government.

Pent up in the rocky fortress of Machaerus, he enquired eagerly of his disciples, who were allowed to visit him, respecting the progress of these great events. But as Jesus confined himself mostly to the obscurer parts of Palestine, remote from the place of John's confinement, and made no civil movement, assumed no political supremacy; as, moreover, the reports which reached the prisoner were few and indefinite, in no degree answering his anticipations of the Messiah's procedure; a morbid discouragement and doubt at length came over the pining prophet.

He did not indeed doubt the divine commission of Jesus; that was settled at the baptism. But the question rose in his mind, whether or no this "Beloved Son" were indeed the Messiah who was foretold by the prophets, and for whom he was sent to prepare the way. Might not Jesus possibly be another herald, like himself, of a still greater to come?

So great was his confidence in the integrity of Jesus, that he only desired an expression from him, to allay his doubts. Hence he sent some of his disciples upon a journey into Galilee, to seek out Jesus and ask him, in the Baptist's name, whether or no he is the one "that should come?" or whether they were to "look for another?"

Arrived in Galilee, the messengers from John find Jesus in the midst of one of those exciting scenes, with a multitude about him, performing a great number of astonishing miracles. Joining the crowd that

surrounds him, they see the blind and infirm of various diseases, some who are smitten with plague, and others possessed by evil spirits, promiscuously approaching their master's friend, and all receiving instant relief. Upon enquiry, they learn that such scenes have become frequent, that even the dead are raised to life.

When, therefore, they ask Jesus the question of John respecting his Messiahship, he simply bids them go and tell John what they see and hear respecting him.

Tell John that "the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."

These deeds of kindness, and miracles of power, exercised not for self aggrandizement, but for the good of the lowly and suffering, and, not least, the preaching of the gospel to the poor and despised, were the true testimonials of Messiahship; yet, as Christ knew, they were testimonials which ill suited the proud and carnal expectations of the Jews. They anticipated quite other displays when Messiah should appear. Hence he says, "blessed are they who shall not be offended in me." Blessed are they who can recognize and receive Messiah in this lowly guise and mission.

When the disciples of John departed, Jesus addressed his disciples and others present, respecting

John and his true position in the theocracy. The preacher whom you went into the wilderness to hear was no quivering reed, and no soft favorite of royalty. He was a prophet, and more than a prophet. As the promised Elias and herald of Messiah, he stood above the whole prophetic order, the last and greatest.

Still, though John stands highest of all under the old dispensation, "the least in the kingdon of heaven (a babe in Christ, in the new dispensation) is greater than he."

John had more correct views of the divine plan and kingdom than had any of his predecessors. Yet he looked for a miraculous temporal triumph of Messiah over the enemies of the visible theocracy; and not for a spiritual kingdom founded through the self-denying toil and vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer. Hence he was below the feeblest Christian who understands the spirituality of the Messiah's mission.

The speaker next glances at the attitude of the nation toward John and himself.

A new longing and ardent zeal for the new kingdom has arisen since the beginning of John's ministry; but it is mostly a temporary excitement. To what "shall I liken this fickle generation?" They are satisfied neither with John nor Jesus; they were displeased with the rigid asceticism of the preacher of repentance; they could not endure so strict a legalist. When the Son of Man comes leading a different life, mingling in the social enjoyments of man-

kind, associating with the common people, and entering into sympathy with all the every-day pursuits and interests of the race, they cry out against him on the other hand, as being lawless and loose, "a friend of publicans and sinners." Like peevish children, they will tolerate neither sadness nor mirth.

"But wisdom is justified of her children." Those who seek and love divine wisdom, and cherish no selfish bigotry and prejudice, can recognize the common truth held forth by both John and Jesus.

They are not, however, the worldly wise, not the learned scribe or pharisee, but those who in simple faith and with child-like confidence, listen to the divine teacher. Hence Christ, looking upon his humble disciples, in contrast with the unbelieving and proud rulers of the Jews, exclaims, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Enough that this is the holy Father's plan. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father." No man can recognize the Son, and receive Jesus as the great Messiah, save those who are given to Christ by the Father. Nor can any one fully and completely know the Son save God; and no one can know God save the Son, and those who receive a revelation of the Father through Christ the Son; so intimate according to Christ is the union between himself and God the Father.

Turning with inexpressible tenderness to the humble Galileans before him, and regarding them as a fit type of the self-renouncing sin-oppressed "babes" who were to become participants of his kingdom, he exclaims, in concluding his discourse, "Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Eloquent peroration, and most rich in divine consolations! Here the revealing Son of God calls upon a heavy-laden world to roll off its burden and come to him for rest. He calls to no new legal bonds or heavy ritual; he imposes no hard injunctions; he will not oppress the poor and weak. Anointed Son of God though he is, about to establish a new kingdom, he is "meek and lowly," the friend of "publicans and sinners." "His yoke is easy, his burden light," they shall find soul-rest in bearing it.

[Luke 7: 36—50.]

An apt illustration follows of the adaptation of the gospel of Christ to the humble and "heavy-laden;" and of the inability of the self-righteous to appreciate it.

A somewhat stupid Pharisee invited Jesus to dine with him, but gave him such a cold and shabby reception as indicated no appreciation of Jesus; and also merited a severe rebuke.

While they were reclining at table, a poor, sinful, but now humbled woman of the place, who had probably been deeply impressed by the above discourse, and the invitation given to heavy-laden souls to come and find rest, came into the room with a box of costly perfume, silently approached the feet of the Saviour, and penitently proceeded in the attitude of a servant to bathe his feet with tears, wipe them with her hair, and perfume them with her spikenard.

The Pharisee, with chuckling complacency, watched this procedure, saying to himself, "This man, if he were a phrophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner."

Pretending at first not to notice the Pharisee's thoughts, Jesus skilfully drew from him an assent to the proposition that the deepest gratitude is naturally exercised by those who receive the greatest favor; then turning upon him for the application, and bidding him mark the conduct of the woman in contrast with his own, showed him that the deepest love is to be expected from such sinners as she, after they have been forgiven; that, on the other hand, little is to be anticipated from those who have no deep sense of their own sinfulness and need of pardon.

Were we writing the life of a mere man we might allude to what we should then call the shrewdness by which the Pharisee is caught. "Simon," says Jesus, "I have somewhat to say unto thee." "Master, say

on," responds the heavy host." "A certain creditor had two debtors," continues the guest, "the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most?" "I suppose that one to whom he forgave most," again answers the Pharisee. "Rightly judged, Simon; seest thou now this woman?"

"Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much." To the woman he says, "thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." The love secures forgiveness; and the forgiveness deepens the love. Repentance, faith, and grace, reciprocally augment each other.

This assertion of forgiveness was, however, capital for the Pharisee and others of his stamp who heard it; they saw in it grounds for a new accusation. "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

[Luke 8: 1—3.]

It may be mentioned here, that among the constant attendants of Jesus at this time, were several women who had received miraculous cures, such as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, Susannah, and others.

These persons had come to the Saviour with a true faith, and received both temporal and spiritual mercies. Filled with gratitude, they devoted themselves and their property to him.

The phrase informing us that they "ministered unto him of their substance "is significant, as showing us in part how the necessary expenses of our Lord were defrayed. His simple mode of life, connected with the hospitality of the people amongst whom he itinerated, demanded but little money; yet something was needed in order that he might devote himself wholly to his ministry. What was needed was contributed, and no doubt cheerfully, by his followers. "The laborer is worthy of," at least his support. The Saviour himself "lived by the gospel" which he preached.

Strict watch was now kept of every movement of Jesus by the jealous Pharisees. Emissaries of this sect from Jerusalem dogged his steps through all the towns of Galilee, seeking grounds of accusation and persecution.

But the evidence of his miraculous transactions was indisputable, and the only remaining hope was to account for his supernatural agency in some way that need not imply the possession of divine favor. Of course this could only be done by attributing his miracles to the agency of an evil spirit.

[Matt. 12: 23—37; Mark 3: 22—30; Luke 11: 14—23.]

The occasion for their first promulgation of this calumny was the healing of a malignant case of demoniacal possession, in which the subject was both dumb and blind.

So remarkable a cure greatly excited the admiration of the Galileans, and in proportion to this, the indignation of the Pharisees. Hence they report that, "This *fellow* doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils." It is a wicked witchcraft by which he heals.

Perceiving their device, Jesus by a few brief illustrations exhibits the absurdity of this charge. That to heal such demoniacs was a good work, and destructive of evil, none could deny; and hence the spirit of evil could not be its mover. Satan would not expel himself or his own minions from a victim; should he do so, his dominion would cease. The thorough cure of this demoniac proves that a spirit of good, the spirit of God, has appeared in your midst; the prince of evil is driven from his citadel; a stronger than he has bound him.

Even the practice of your own exorcists refutes your charge. They claim to cast out devils, and you and they admit that if they cast them out it must be by the power of God.

This monstrous perversion of reason and exhibition of malice deeply grieved our Lord. He could easily endure insults offered to his humanity; but he could not endure that the divine spirit by which he worked for the world's redemption should be maligned and called a devil. Hence, having refuted the calumny of the Pharisees, he turns upon them and presses home the wickedness of their unbelief and malice. His argument runs thus.

The expulsion of this demon proves to every candid mind the presence in me of the Spirit and power of God. This very act is a triumph in behalf of God's kingdom over the power of evil. By opposing me you prove yourselves adverse to God's kingdom; your unbelief is of the heart, and against your honest convictions. "Whosoever is not with me is against me." And opposing me, you oppose the Spirit of God, by which I work; this is the sin of deepest dye. "All manner of sin and blasphemy against the Son of Man," Christ as man, "may be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Ghost," such an accusation against the power by which I work as you have made, "hath never forgiveness, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." Such a blasphemer "is in danger of eternal damnation."

And such blasphemies grow naturally out of your corrupt hearts that will not see the truth. The tree must be changed before the fruit can be. "O generation of vipers," he exclaims, rising to awful sternness and fiery rebuke, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good?" Out of a full heart gush the kindred words; and yet for each idle word shall you give account at the judgment. By your words, as the index of your hearts, shall you be justified or condemned.

[Matt. 12: 38—45; Luke 11: 16; 24—36.]

Some of the Scribes and Pharisees, less hostile to

Christ than those spoken of above, expressed to him their wish to see some more convincing sign of his Messiahship, something like the voice of God on Sinai, that should be startling and overwhelming, and have no other aim than to confirm his claims. Expectations of such "signs" were probably general amongst the Jews. But Christ gratified no such expectation; he would exercise his divine power only in deeds of charity and love. Hence he sternly rebukes their carnal desire.

As it was with Jonah and the Ninevites, so shall it be with this generation. No other sign shall be given them than the voice of him who preaches repentance. The whole life and labor of the Son of Man is a most convincing sign. The Ninevites shall condemn this generation, for they repented at Jonah's preaching; but a greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the south shall condemn this age; for she came to hear Solomon, but a greater than Solomon is here.

The Son of Man is a light, not hidden, but conspicuously placed, and brightly shining into this darkened age. If any fail to see him, it is because their perception is deficient. See to it, therefore, that your inner light, that by which alone the divine manifestation can be perceived, be not darkness. If there be no seeing eye within, all shall be dark, whatever be the sign exhibited; but if the inner vision be clear, all shall be full of light.

This is the difficulty with this degenerate age. It

is an age of blindness, stupidity, and demonism. Some little interest has been awakened by the preaching of John and Jesus. But the multitude have received no thorough illumination, and are ready, like a half cured demoniac, operated upon by false exorcists, to return to their old ways, seven-fold worse than before.

Yet there were some susceptible souls who needed no other sign of Christ's divinity. Even while Christ was exposing the Pharisees and denouncing the "evil generation," a woman in the crowd was so deeply impressed, that she cried out aloud, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked!" Rejecting, however, her crude veneration, he replied, "Blessed rather are they that hear the word of God and keep it." Spiritual affinities are more valuable than natural relationships.

[Matt. 12: 46—50; Mark 3: 31—35; Luke 8: 19—21.]

To the same purport is Christ's remark respecting his mother and brethren when they came to confine him as a lunatic.

Christ's peculiar mode of life and style of preaching attended by such unheard-of works, and the amazing excitement produced amongst the common people, might have led many a stupid Pharisee to regard him as a mad-man.

But it was mainly a device to restrain him, which led them probably to persuade the family of Joseph

that Jesus was insane. Doubtless Mary could have had no such thought. But the other members of the family were completely unable to appreciate their brother; and hence were fit to be the dupes of Pharisaical guile. Mary, unable to counteract their delusion, went with them, doubtless as a fond mother would, to mitigate their harshness, and favor her first-born.

The healing of the demoniac, and the excitement attending that event, led them to seek to carry out the wish of the Pharisees, to seize and confine Jesus, immediately after the above incident. But as he continued his discourse the congregation increased, and the throng was so great that they could not gain access to him. At length a message is passed along through the crowd, and one who stands near informs him that his mother and brethren, outside of the press, desire to speak with him. Intent on his great work, however, he calmly turns the attention of the listeners to a higher truth. Who are my relatives? he enquires. Not kindred by blood; but these my faithful disciples, these who do the will of my Father who is in heaven, are my mother and brethren.

The absurdity of this charge of insanity was too apparent to admit an execution of the purpose for which it was instituted.

[Luke 11: 37—54.]

The constant machinations of the Pharisees served

only to lead Jesus more fully to expose and denounce them. Conscious of his own rectitude and strength, and the appointment of his time by the Father, he exercised only the prudence not to throw himself needlessly into danger, and persevered to preach his righteous doctrines.

Different motives impelled the Pharisees to pay more or less regard to Jesus, and frequently to invite him to their houses. His position before the world challenged at least common civilities, and Christ made such occasions tell upon his cause. One of his severest philippics against the false upper classes was uttered at the table of a Pharisee who invited him to dine at his house, after the above discourse.

Jesus, perhaps designedly, in order to find occasion to rebuke the hollow formalism of the Pharisees, omitted the customary ablution of the hands before going to table. In reply to his host's surprise, he proceeded to reprove him for the hypocrisy of his order.

Ye Pharisees make clean the outside, but within are uncleanness and wickedness. Fools, did not he that made that which is without also make that which is within? Purify your hearts as well as your hands. Tithe what is within you, tax your affections, and then shall all things be clean for you. When the inside is right, it matters little respecting the exterior.

"But wo unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint,

and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God. These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Wo unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."

These fierce sentences went like daggers to the hearts of the listeners. A lawyer present, unaccustomed to rebuke, suggests to Jesus that these charges touch his order also; whereupon the fearless speaker turns upon him with still sharper reproof and denunciation. "Wo unto you also, lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Wo unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. You bear witness that you allow the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Verily the blood of all the prophets, from Abel to Zacharias, shall be required of this generation." You lawyers show the disposition, and by your conduct sanction the deeds of your wicked ancesters. The blood which they shed is therefore upon you. You are also deceivers of the people; pretending to be their spiritual guides, you lead them astray. Therefore again, "Wo unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye

entered not in yourselves (into the true knowledge of the Scriptures), and them that were entering in ye hindered."

By this time, the frenzy of the Pharisees, Scribes, and lawyers present, became uncontrollable. Filled with rage, they regard no propriety, but each one burns to demolish the pungent reprover. Vehemently they assail him with questions and taunts, and cunning devices. They crowd upon him, snarl at him, heap question upon question, in the hope of entangling him and drawing from him some unguarded remark, upon which to base a criminal accusation. But in all their zeal and fury, the stern preacher remains calm and composed, meekly answers their questions and foils their devices.

[Luke 12: 1—59.]

The indignation and uproar raised by the above discourse broke up the interview in the Pharisees' house; and Jesus again went out, but not alone. The multitude had by this time found refreshments, and were ready to listen again to the great Teacher. As Christ came out into the open air, he found the house surrounded by an eager throng, awaiting impatiently his appearance. The boldness and success with which he attacked and scourged the Pharisees no doubt heightened the zeal of the common people to hear him. Hence, upon the present occasion, we are told that they pressed forward in countless numbers, crowding

upon and even treading down one another in their zeal to get near the speaker.

Taking his place, with his disciples immediately about him, the Saviour now delivered another discourse particularly to them; and in part also to the people; aiming first of all to point out, and warn them against, the peculiar vices and devices of the Pharisees.

Beware, says he, of Pharisaical hypocrisy. It is an evil leaven which cannot be hidden. Nothing is covered or hidden that shall not be exposed: that which is whispered in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops: hypocrisy is short-lived.

Again, my friends, fear not the malice of these enemies; at most they can but kill the body. Fear only Him who has power after he has killed to cast into hell. Trust God to guard you from the wiles of men. He forgets not even the sparrow that is sold for less than a farthing. Ye are worth more than many sparrows, and in his gracious providence even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Hence when they drag you before magistrates and powers, have no anxiety for your defence. God's Holy Spirit shall teach you what to say. Peace with the world is not to be expected. (v. 49, &c.) I am come to send fire on the earth; a fire already kindled; but this is not all; I have a baptism of suffering, and am earnest and pained for its accomplishment. Think ye I came to give peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather division. Henceforth families shall be divided,

father against son and son against father; mother and daughter, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, shall be divided against each other. My followers shall be persecuted and driven from their homes by nearest blood-relations. But even this affords a sign that Messiah has come. When clouds rise in the west you look for rain, and when the south wind blows, you say there will be heat, and so it comes to pass. And why cannot ye, who thus discern the indications of change in the natural world, also read the signs of the times? Why not discern the advent of Messiah, and secure his friendship before he becomes your accuser, and delivers you to that penalty from which you cannot be delivered? Now is the time to secure reconciliation and friendship.

(Vs. 13, &c.) A pause at this point of the discourse gave occasion for an incident indicative of the confidence placed by the people in the practical judgment and integrity of our Lord. He had just spoken of the duty of being reconciled quickly to an adversary. A man present, whose conscience was perhaps disturbed by the remark, on account of a difficulty between himself and his brother relative to the division of their patrimony, stept forward and requested Christ to act as arbitrator between them.

In accordance with his steadfast purpose to avoid all interference in civil affairs, Jesus declined the request, and took occasion from the incident to discourse upon the evils of covetousness, and to incul-

cate trust in Providence, and faithfulness in the circumstances under which we are placed.

Beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of his possessions. Then follows the beautiful parable of the rich man, whose grounds produced plentifully, whose barns and storehouses were all filled, and who, in his perplexity as to how he should dispose of all his wealth, determined to pull down his barns and build greater; and who began to chuckle over his resources, saying to his soul, "thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."

But while he sat musing thus in his easy chair, of a sudden, God, with startling voice, cried out upon him that dreadful exclamation, "Fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall thy possessions be?"

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

Then followed a beautiful exhortation to the disciples to cherish no anxiety about the body and its necessities. God builds the body; you can not by any planning add a cubit to your stature. And why, therefore, should you be anxious? Trust him who feeds the birds and adorns the flowers; imitate not the worldly in their eager pursuit of temporal good. Your Father knows your necessities; seek first his kingdom, and other things shall be provided. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure

to give you the kingdom. Be charitable with your possessions, and seek rather the incorruptible treasure in the heavens. There let your hearts centre; and be ye like stewards and servants holding your goods in trust, and hourly waiting in expectation of the master to whom you are responsible. Be ye ready, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Peter hereupon enquired whether the figure of servants watching for their Lord was meant for him and the other disciples particularly, or for all present.

To this it is replied, that the servant who proves most faithful shall be most highly esteemed and rewarded; and that one who has the greater knowledge has the greater responsibility. The one who receives rich instructions and disregards them shall be beaten with many stripes. Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.

Thus Christ conceals from his nearest followers the time of his second coming, and bids them watch and be ready even at midnight to give up their account.

We notice in the discourses of Christ, about this period, an increasing use of the parabolic style. The parable was ever a favorite in oriental teaching, but peculiarly so with Christ. As used by him it served several important ends. First, it gave a freshness and originality to his style, wholly unlike the dry dogmatising of the teachers of that age, and thus secured attention to the truth. Moreover, it served

to embody inexhaustible divine truths in material imagery upon which all classes of men could study with interest and profit. Again, it was calculated to cover from the sight of the obtuse and vicious that truth which they would abuse and trample swine-like under their feet; while at the same time it preserved the truth, as a shell preserves its kernel, for those who had a heart to remember and meditate upon it.

The imagery used by Christ was drawn generally from the common processes of nature, and the simple pursuits of a rural people, such as the Galileans to whom he preached. Remarkable events in the history of the times were also seized upon as types of general truths. Thus, the slaughter of several (Luke 13: 1—9.) Galileans while offering sacrifice, by Herod, a dark and cruel deed regarded by the people as a peculiar judgment of heaven upon the individuals, was used by Christ to call attention to the universal guilt of the nation and the ruin they would bring upon themselves if they refused to repent. So also the falling of the tower of Siloam upon eighteen men was no proof of their greater wickedness, but was an emblem of the general destruction which would soon come down upon the whole people.

In the same connection was uttered the parable of the fig tree in a vineyard, from which the owner sought fruit three years in vain, and then ordered it to be cut down for barrenness, but at the intercession of the gardener spared it another year. This parable beautifully

represents the barrenness of the Jewish nation, and their speedy removal, in order that the culture expended upon them might be given to others who would be fruitful, and exhibit a true piety.

[Matt. 13: 1—23; Mark 4: 1—25; Luke 8: 4—18.]

The elevated hills about Gennessaret and the fertile plain along the western shore afforded a variety of imagery for our Lord's discourses. On one occasion, probably in seed-time, we find him leaving the city and going down by the lake shore, where a great multitude immediately collects about him.

As on a former occasion, he enters a boat, and sitting down upon it as it floats at anchor a little out, addresses the multitude on shore. In the course of his address, he delivers the beautiful parable of the sower and the seed, illustrative of the reception which his truth receives, and its history in the world.

In many of Christ's previous discourses, we may have marked his thorough understanding of the men and times in which he lived, and his practical skill in adapting his discourse to the true wants of his hearers.

In this parable, and others like it, we see how clearly and prophetically he discerned the future history of his gospel and kingdom in the world. He seems to have foreseen from the beginning the whole history of Christianity.

They err most gratuitously who conjecture that

Christ's plans and hopes were frustrated by his enemies. He knew too well the condition and the philosophy of the human mind and character to be disappointed in his calculations. He knew well the soil, the seed, and the processes by which and from which his kingdom was to grow.

As the farmer's seed sown in these unfenced fields of Galilee falls, some by the way side, and is devoured by the fowls; some in stony places, where it has no depth of earth and withers after a short, unnatural growth; some among thorns, by which it is choked and rendered fruitless; but some into a rich and mellow soil which produces, in various degrees, thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold; so is it with the seed of truth. One hearer, wholly unsusceptible, receives no impression from the truth; it is snatched away by evil birds and lost.

Another, with a quick susceptibility, but no depth of principle, gives the truth a pert welcome, and sends forth sudden verdure as if the truth had found a fit soil; but the first enthusiasm over, when adverse influences begin to work, his piety dies; he has not a faith that can strive and triumph.

Another blends piety and worldliness, and cherishes impure desires, until his faith is choked and killed by the unhallowed alliance. All these classes yield no genuine fruits.

There are, however, others who honestly receive the truth and yield the appropriate fruits; though in

different proportions, according to their susceptibility and the degree in which they yield themselves up to its influence.

Plain and striking as this parable seems to us, a private interpretation was needed by the disciples. After explaining it to them, Jesus proceeds to teach them that, as they are the favored ones to whom the mysteries of truth are to be revealed, while the hardened multitudes hear and understand not, they should faithfully receive his instructions, and seek to reflect the light which falls upon them. As his ministers they are not to hide the truth, but to exhibit it. Therefore, says he, take heed how ye hear.

[Matt. 13: 24—53; Mark 4: 26—34.]

Similar in imagery, but of a different aim, is the parable of the wheat and the tares growing in the same field until the harvest; the one kind growing for the granary, and the other for the fire.

So in the visible church must we tolerate often false disciples amongst the true, and await God's final separation and purification; such a separation he will make. The reaper-angels shall "gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them;" and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

Of similar import is the parable of the net and fishes. (vs. 47—50.) As the net gathers of every kind, and the fishermen on shore "gather the good

into baskets, but cast the bad away; so the church below gathers of every kind, but upon the shore of eternity, "the angels shall separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire."

These parables seem to have been mainly designed for the disciples. The following seems fitted to show them that the results of preaching are not dependent upon human efficiency. We are to cast in the good seed, and trust Providence to bring the crop. The husbandman sows the seed, and then sleeps and rises night and day, leaving it to the faithful earth which sends forth, he knows not how, in succession the blade, the ear, and the full grain in the ear. Without the farmer's nurture comes the harvest, and he puts in his sickle and reaps. So in the hearts of men shall grow the seeds of truth, if faithfully sown.

"The germ of truth may be small and its progress slow; but though small, as a grain of mustard seed, it will become a tree; the life is in it, and it shall fill the world. As a quickening leaven it will work through all human society, infusing a new and heavenly life.

"And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to bear it." Thus in the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl, Christ sets forth the value of religion and the necessity of an entire devotion in order to attain it. One finds it as it were by accident, in his neighbor's field; another, after protracted search in foreign markets;

but each must purchase it by the sacrifice of "all that he has." The kingdom of God must be valued above all other treasures.

In a conversation with his disciples, after the delivery of the parables alluded to above, Christ intimates to them that his style of teaching is to be their model. Every scribe should be able thus to bring forth things new and old, to lead his hearers from old and common truth, to that which is new and higher; and to do it by the use of new and pleasing illustrations.

The latter part of this discourse was delivered to the disciples who sought and received in private more particular explanations of passages uttered in public. Jesus had dismissed the congregation to which he had spoken, and had entered into a house in the town near the lake, perhaps for refreshments.

[Matt. 8: 18—27; Mark 4: 35—41; Luke 8: 22—25; Luke 9: 57—62.]

Toward evening as he went forth, the multitude again surrounded him. As he proceeded toward the lake, a man who had been somewhat deeply impressed by his preaching, proposed to follow him as a constant disciple. Christ, however, instead of encouraging his proposition, took occasion to point out the self-denials and toils involved in such a course of life. I have no rewards and worldly honors or enjoyments for my followers; I promise no earthly kingdom, nor sensual

heaven. Poorer than the birds or the foxes, the Son of Man has not where to lay his head.

How unlike the policy of impostors is this; and how clearly did Christ foresee the hindrances and sufferings that should attend his church.

But while Christ discouraged and refused the fellowship of those who had not a true devotion, he called upon others to forsake all and follow him. Thus, one of the company, on this same occasion, who had attached himself to Christ, asked permission to retire and bury his father.

Jesus disapproved of no natural affection, and would discourage no filial duty; but this instance was seized upon by him to inculcate the necessity of a complete surrender of the world and of all natural ties, when the interests of God's kingdom demand it. "Let the dead," says he, "bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Others, who have no appreciation of the importance of the gospel-ministry, can attend to these common duties; let him who has a higher calling obey it without distraction.

In the same spirit he says to another, who would go and bid farewell to his friends at home before following the Saviour, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." No one is fit for a disciple who does not once for all give himself up entirely to his Lord's service.

Having reached the lake, Christ again entered a

boat belonging to some of his disciples, and having dismissed the multitude that attended him, bade his disciples sail across to the eastern shore of Gennessaret. Several other boats, manned in part by those who were strangers to Jesus, were about to cross over at the same time. As night came on the little fleet set sail, and bore off to the south-east for the coast of Gadara.

Wearied with his exhausting labors, the Saviour lay down in the stern of the vessel and fell asleep. The sea of Galilee has ever been subject to sudden storms of wind that come sweeping down from the naked hills around it. In the course of the night, such a wrathful tempest came down suddenly upon the little fleet; the billows soon broke furiously over the vessels, threatening to engulf them; terror and dismay seized upon the sailors. The appalled disciples, half angry that their master should sleep so calmly in such an hour, awoke him, one crying, "carest thou not that we perish?" and another, "Lord, save or we perish."

Rising up at their entreaty, the awakened sleeper manifested no anxiety and shared in no degree their alarm; but turning composedly to the roaring sea and peering out into the darkness, he cried, in commanding tone, "Peace, be still!"

And quick as soldiers to the captain's "halt!" the obedient wind and wave sank down, and "there was a great calm."

The design of the miracle was probably to contrast the calmness and self-possession of Christ with the timidity of the disciples, and to strengthen their faith in his dominion over nature, and in his ability to subdue all things to his divine purpose, and specially to calm the troubled minds of terrified men. Hence Christ reproved their faithlessness and fear. Did they not know that the Son of God was with them? The impression produced upon some of the sailors or passengers, who had little knowledge of Jesus, was deep and fearful. "What manner of man is this," who sails with us, say they, "that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

[Matt. 8: 28—34; 9: 1; Mark 5: 1—21; Luke 8: 26—40.]

Morning found the voyagers climbing the rugged hills of Gadara. Near the lake, upon a high bluff, they passed herds of swine, those unclean beasts, most odious to a Jew. Further on, in the region of the tombs which still abound in the hill-sides, they were met by two demoniacs; the one naked and fierce exceedingly, a raving maniac whom no chains or guards could restrain, and who loved to wander amid the tombs and caverns, making them more doleful by his cries and ravings.

The fame of Christ's power over spirits clean and unclean had doubtless long before this circulated through the region of Gadara, and the wild demoniac had heard of him with an idiot's fear.

This poor and wretched man was fully impressed with the belief that his personality was suppressed and subjected by evil spirits, and that he was constantly acting the demon. Learning that the great exorcist had come, the Son of the Most High who controlled the dark realm of devils, he was at once fearfully excited. His proper person, the lingering consciousness of true humanity that remained in him, seemed drawn with reverence to the Savior; but at the same time the evil spirit rose in fear and anger, and, by its superior might, compelled him to cry out, "What have we to do with thee, thou Son of the Most High God? Art thou come to torment us before the time? In the name of God, we adjure thee, torment us not!"

Here was a consciousness that Jesus was to be the final judge, and that the doom of the evil legion was determined. This is the more noteworthy, for the reason that this demoniac was probably a pagan.

Jesus mildly addressed him, asking his name, and thus softening his feelings, while he bade the unclean spirit come out of him. Pointing to the unclean beasts in the distance, the demoniac, as the organ of the demons, entreated that they might enter into them.

The record is brief, much that was said being probably omitted by the Evangelists. Suffice it that the demoniac suddenly grows tame and mild; the demon goes out of him; he sinks subdued, reasonable, and joyful at the Savior's feet. But as his madness de-

parts, the swine to which he pointed are seized with ungovernable frenzy and rush headlong down the precipice into the lake.

The rumor of these strange transactions soon reaches the city and the surrounding country. Anon the excited populace rush to the spot where Jesus and his company and the changed maniac still remain. Meantime the cured man has been clothed, and sits as a docile pupil at Jesus' feet. The sight of this man so changed, and the account of the drowned swine, strike the superstitious Gadarenes with terror, and they stupidly entreat Jesus to leave their territory; an entreaty with which he complies, to their great loss.

The now devoted and grateful demoniac entreats Jesus to let him follow as a disciple. But the Saviour bids him go home and bear witness to his friends and countrymen "how great things the Lord has done for him."

We hear of him no more, save that he went his way and published his cure through Gadara and all Decapolis. Probably the reason why Christ refused him the privilege of following him was to secure his testimony and influence amongst the heathen of that region; hence, he bade him publish his cure. While in Galilee he frequently enjoined secrecy in similar cases.

[Matt. 9: 10—17; Mark 2: 15—22; Luke 5: 29—39.]

After the above transaction, Jesus returned again

across the lake to Capernaum. Upon landing, he was welcomed by an enthusiastic crowd of people, who were anxiously awaiting his return.

Levi, who was probably the Matthew of the New Testament, celebrated this occasion by making a great feast; perhaps partly in honor of Jesus, and partly as a farewell to his old companions. That Christ should hold any intercourse with publicans was abhorrent to the Pharisees; but when they saw him go to attend a social party at the house of a publican, where that class of persons mainly composed the company, they could not conceal their surprise and contempt from his disciples.

Jesus hearing their complaint pertinently remarked, that he came to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The whole need no physician. The lower class were they who most felt their need of a Saviour, and were most susceptible to renewing influences. The Pharisees were indeed as needy, but unconscious of their malady, they desired not the physician, and were not apt subjects for Christ's ministry.

Our Lord's free participation in the social enjoyments of mankind, and the cheerful kind of life led by his disciples, presented another point of offence to the Pharisaical party, and also to the disciples of John the Baptist.

On the present occasion, some of them enquire of Jesus why his disciples do not fast frequently, as do

the disciples of John and the Pharisees? The purport of Christ's answer is, that the virtue of fasting lies in the disposition of heart and mind which it expresses, and is insignificant and improper where there is no sadness and bitterness of soul to prompt it. On this account it is not now a time for Christ's disciples to fast. Why should the guests fast while with the bridegroom? After the festal days will come a time for sadness. The disciples are now living in free and joyful communion with their Lord. When he shall be removed, it will be time for them to fast. In the hours of grief and darkness, which shall succeed his departure, they will spontaneously express their sorrow in these symbols which would now be but mockery. Propriety should be observed. A specific form of religion may not always be appropriate. The new spirit of Christianity may not comport with the old garments of Pharisaical formalism.

Sew a patch of unfulled cloth upon an old garment, and it will shrink and leave the garment with a larger rent. Pour new wine into old skins, and it will by fermentation burst them, and both be lost. Cramp the joyous spirit of a new disciple by old, ascetic formalisms, and you mar and disfigure the character and life. No man, having tasted old and mellow wine, immediately desires that which is new and sour. So the disciples having participated in the gentle and cheerful spirit of the gospel, can not be at once led into the austere discipline of the ceremonial law. In

due time, and in appropriate ways, they may learn more rigid rules.

[Matt. 9: 18—26; Mark 5: 22—43; Luke 8: 41—56.]

While engaged in this discourse, respecting the mode of life pursued by his disciples, Christ was interrupted by Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who came with an earnest request that he would go speedily to his house and save his daughter, who was even now at the point of death. He doubted not that if Jesus would but go and lay his hand upon her she should live.

In compliance with his request the Saviour went with him, attended by a throng of people. Indeed, so great was the multitude that Jesus was hindered in the way, and another miracle was performed before he could reach the house of Jairus.

A woman who had suffered from an issue twelve years spent all that she had with physicians, suffered much, and was still growing worse, had heard of Jesus and conceived the notion that a kind of magical virtue streamed from him, so that if she could but touch his garment she should be healed.

Not having courage to speak to the Saviour she took advantage of the pressure and throng of the people to get near enough to him to touch, as she desired, his clothes. In accordance with her faith, the issue instantly ceased. Incorrect as was her view of

the Saviour, her faith was approved, and her hope realized.

Jesus, conscious that healing virtue had gone forth from him, enquired instantly who touched him. Whether he knew, or did not know, the woman's act and experience is not clear. It would seem that the Father worked through him almost unconsciously to him. Or he may have desired to exhibit the woman's faith, and asked who touched him merely in order to draw out her testimony before others; probably this was the truth in the case.

Peter was surprised that in such a press and throng his master should ask who touched him; as if but one had touched him. But when Jesus insisted upon an answer, the trembling woman came forward and confessed the whole. Jesus approved her faith, and bade her go in peace.

By this time they were met by messengers from the house of Jairus who reported that the girl was dead, all hope lost, and that the father need not "trouble the Master any further." Jesus would not, however, suffer the hope of the sorrowing parent, who had come to him in faith, to be frustrated; and, therefore, said to Jairus, "Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole."

Arrived at the house, they find the mourners loudly lamenting and wailing, according to the oriental custom. To Christ's remark that the "damsel is not

dead but sleepeth," they reply with sneers and scorn, "knowing that she was dead." The confidence with which Christ encouraged Jairus to expect his child's restoration must have rested upon a divine assurance of the power to raise her from death. The circumstances were such as to preclude any mere man from predicting with confidence her resuscitation.

Sending them all out of the room save Peter, James, and John, his faithful witnesses, and the parents of the girl, in order that the miracle may be wrought in silence, Jesus now takes the hand of the corpse, and in his calm, commanding tone, calls, as to an inhabitant of the other world, "Maid, arise!" And straightway she obeys, arises, and walks. Presenting her to the astonished parents, the Saviour bids them give her some refreshment, and make no publicity of the miracle. The enthusiasm of the people was already so high, that Jesus desired secrecy rather than notoriety in his works. Still, with his utmost precautions, it was impossible to prevent the rumor of these great deeds from spreading abroad "through all the land."

[Matt. 9: 27—34.]

One illustration of this occurred immediately after the above transaction. As Jesus left the place, two blind men followed him, crying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

Unwilling to perform a cure for them publicly, as

it had now become almost impossible for him to pass along the streets, Jesus paid no attention to them until they had followed him into a house, to which he retired to escape the multitude. When alone with them, he listened to their petition, questioned them concerning their faith, and opened their eyes, saying, "according to your faith be it unto you." Having cured them, he "strictly charged them, saying, see that no man know it." But, notwithstanding this strict injunction of silence, as soon as "they were departed, they spread abroad his fame in all that country." The healing of a dumb idiot "possessed with a devil" is mentioned by Matthew in this connection; but the circumstances would seem to indicate that it was the same case spoken of in Matt. 12: 22, &c.

Christ now left the vicinity of the lake and made another circuit through other parts of Galilee. In the opinion of some he again visited Nazareth, was again rejected, and departed "marvelling," (Matt. 13: 54—58; Mark 6: 1—6) because of their unbelief. In support of the opinion of a second visit to Nazareth is the remark that he "laid his hands upon a few sick folks and healed them;" whereas in the other case, recorded in Luke 4: 16—30, he is represented as refusing to perform any miracle at Nazareth.

It is not impossible, however, that, although on his first visit he refused to perform a miracle publicly, merely to gratify an idle curiosity, he might have healed "a few sick folk" in the place or vicinity, in

a private and unostentatious manner, either before or after the excitement occasioned by his discourse in the synagogue. Hence it seems probable that Jesus visited Nazareth but once as a public teacher, and that the above is the true solution of the variations in the narratives.

[Matt. 7 : 6 ; Matt. 9 : 35—38 ; Matt. 10 : 1—15 ; Matt. 11 : 1 ; Mark 6 : 6—13 ; Luke 9 : 1—6.]

Over two years of Christ's public ministry had now passed. His disciples had enjoyed many opportunities of hearing his doctrines and witnessing his miracles. As a prominent object was to fit them to be ambassadors and preachers of the gospel, Christ, in view of the spiritual destitution of the Galileans and the great work that was opening up before him, determined at this time to send forth the twelve on a mission through the neighboring towns. Doubtless the practical influence of such a mission upon the disciples themselves, as preparatory to their future ministry, was one object in sending them out at this time. But compassion for the destitute, wandering multitudes, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, prompted the Saviour to extend his labors through the aid of the disciples. "The harvest," said he, "is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers."

The twelve had not yet become well enough instructed in the doctrines and plans of Christ to preach

the full gospel, or to contend with sceptics, and face enemies. Hence they were directed simply to proclaim to those who were looking for Messiah that he had come. "As ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The new dispensation has dawned; the Redeemer has come.

Hence also they were restricted to the region where the least prejudice would be met, and where the people would most readily listen to their simple and cheering story. Israel was to receive the first ministrations of the gospel. On the old dispensation, as a basis, was to rest the new. Samaria and Heathendom were not appropriate fields for the first evangelical efforts. Christ himself only went upon foreign soil enough to overcome the prejudice of his disciples, and to give them an example which they might imitate after they should receive their final commission, and be endowed with the plenitude of the spirit.

It was important that the disciples, even in this preparatory mission, should be able to confirm by incontrovertible testimony the truth of their proclamation that the kingdom of God had come.

Hence, Jesus endowed them also with power to work miracles. "Heal the sick," says he to them, "cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils." How full of the divine power was he who could thus communicate to others the ability to work all miracles.

Furthermore, he enjoined upon them not to make their gifts a source of gain and personal emolument.

"Freely ye have received, freely give." Yet, although they might not "sell the gift of God for money," as laborers they were worthy of a support. Hence, said he, take with you no provision of food or clothing; go as you are. Cast yourselves upon the generosity of the people to whom you preach; and take such fare as they offer you. If rejected in one place, go to another, shaking "off the dust of your feet for a testimony against them" who reject you. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." (Matt. 7 : 6.) They were not indiscriminately and rashly to force their doctrines upon men of carnal and hostile feelings, who would only be enraged by them. Propriety of time and place should be observed. Labor should not be thrown away upon the utterly unsusceptible. They should be bold, but discreet.

Thus commissioned, the twelve departed "by two and two;" "and went through the towns," preaching that "men should repent." "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."

And when Jesus had sent out his disciples, he also "departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities."

[Matt. 14 : 6—11 ; Mark 6 : 21—29.]

About this period a sad tragedy was enacted in the fortress of Machaerus were John the Baptist was

still confined. Already had the stern preacher of repentance lain in confinement eighteen tedious months; but the revenge of his enemies was not satisfied. Herod's unhallowed amour, which had caused John's imprisonment, was also to cause his death. The tetrarch himself feared to offer violence to the holy preacher; but a rash oath, made to the daughter of Herodias, became the occasion for John's death-warrant.

Without indictment, trial or warning, the guiltless prophet was suddenly called to confront the executioner. Friendless and helpless the holy man yielded in silence; the remorseless steel did its speedy work; down on the prison floor rolled the headless trunk of John; and down and away from the rocky fortress went his reeking head, to gratify the malice of a heartless adultress. So went silent the voice of him that cried in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." So died the last and greatest of the prophets of the old dispensation, and the first herald of the new.

[Matt. 14: 1—2; Mark 6: 14—16; Luke 9: 7—9.]

Meantime the disciples of Jesus have extended the fame of their master. Mighty works have been multiplied in his name; the story of his miracles soon reaches the court of Herod. With it comes the conjecture that this miracle-worker may be the same as that preacher of righteousness who had two years before

made such an excitement through all Palestine, and who had recently been unrighteously executed. The suggestion takes fast hold of the conscience-smitten Herod. The ghastly present in the charger that he had given to the beautiful, but heartless dancer, haunts the tetrarch; he would gladly see whether those fearful features can be detected in the face of Jesus.

[Matt. 14: 12—21; Mark 6: 30—44; Luke 9: 10—17; John 6: 1—14.]

The few disciples of John who lingered about the southern border of Perea, hearing the fate of their master, went and buried his headless body, and then in their forlorn sorrow sought the company and sympathy of Jesus and his disciples.

Soon after, the twelve hearing that Herod had destroyed John, and now desired to see Jesus, suspecting that he might be the Baptist raised from the dead, returned to Jesus and reported the events of their mission. The time for which they had been sent out had expired. The passover was also approaching, and caravans began to collect for the annual journey to Jerusalem.

They found Jesus at Capernaum, surrounded as usual by multitudes, and employed in his wonted labors.

Both Jesus and his disciples were now wearied with protracted toil. They had lived as in the constant excitement and pressure of a great protracted

meeting for many months; and little opportunity could be enjoyed for private intercourse between them.* Should they now join the caravan and attend the passover, their labors would be increased, and their facilities for private intercourse diminished; so great and wide-spread was the interest felt throughout all Palestine relative to Christ and his works.

In order to avoid for a while the machinations of enemies, particularly of the Pharisees at Jerusalem, and to secure a season of retirement and quiet for the better instruction of his disciples, and at the same time to recruit their exhausted energies, Jesus determined at this time, contrary to his custom, to stay away from the passover.

Hence, when his disciples gathered about him upon their return, he said to them in language most touching to one who considers the travels and toils which he had undergone, "come apart into a desert place and rest awhile." The writer adds, that "there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat." Weary, working, sympathising Son of Man, who could more need rest and solitude? But no rest could yet be attained.

As companies were just forming to go to Jerusalem, and all society was astir, the crowds that followed the Saviour were still greater than usual. Hence, privacy and retirement were for him naturally impossible, as appeared from the following incidents: an arrangement was made by the disciples to take a

boat privately, and convey Jesus across the northern end of the lake from Capernaum to a "desert place" near Bethsaida-Julius.

But the watchful multitude discover the plan, and some of them recognize Jesus as he embarks. No sooner had the little vessel started for the opposite shore than the signal was given, and off started the enthusiastic multitudes on foot around the northern end of the lake, determined to meet him at the opposite landing. Zeal lent speed; and when the boat neared the eastern shore, the ardent multitude were there to greet her.

The sight of these people moved the compassionate Saviour, who looked upon them "as sheep not having a shepherd." He received them kindly, renounced for the present the hope of rest and quiet, and instantly began to "speak unto them of the kingdom of God," and to heal "such as had need of healing."

Evening came on and found the multitude, now weary and faint, still listening to Christ's discourse. All day they had followed and attended him, regardless of fatigue and hunger. Now they were in a desolate place with no provision; some of them too faint, and perhaps also too poor, to go to Bethsaida or elsewhere for food.

The compassionate teacher, mindful of their need, confers with his disciples respecting a meal for the vast congregation. The disciples can devise no better method than to disperse the crowd, and let them shift

for themselves. Twenty-eight dollars worth of bread, says Philip, would not be enough to furnish each one with a small piece. We can not make such an expenditure; neither is a supply attainable if we had the money. But, says Jesus, they must not depart hungry; we must feed them. Andrew remarks, that a lad present (probably a huckster, who had followed the multitude) has "five barley-loaves and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?" "Bring them to me," replies Jesus, and make the multitude "sit down by fifties in a company." Without further parley, the order is obeyed. By fifties the men divide off and recline upon the grassy plain, till a hundred fifties are ranged around, "besides women and children."

"Looking up to heaven," Jesus now blesses the bread, and begins to break the loaves and divide the fishes, and distribute "to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." One company, and another, and another, is supplied; and still he goes on to break and distribute. Fifty fifties have been supplied, and still he breaks, and divides, and gives. And on, and on goes the work, and the loaves still multiply! Five thousand hungry men have eaten, and still the bread and the fish abound; and every woman and every child receives a liberal share, and eats and is satisfied, all are satisfied; and fragments lie thick around that may fill many baskets.

The impression upon the multitude is deep and

strong. "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world," say they. Heretofore they believed Jesus to be a prophet. But this climax of miracles, this virtual creation of a material substance, in which no psychical influence could operate, convinces them that Jesus is "the prophet," the Messiah that should come. This must be the "king of Israel." And why shall he not be at once crowned and proclaimed? Here we are, five thousand able witnesses of his miraculous, creative power; why shall we not raise the Messianic standard and proclaim him head of the theocracy?

Such sentiments begin to run through the admiring thousands, whose enthusiasm now seems irresistible.

But Jesus knows better the plan and issue of his mission. No civil crown will he wear, no army will he head against the powers that be. His kingdom is not of this world. Nor is this admiring multitude possessed of such a devotion as he approves. He will evade and frustrate their design.

Night coming on, Jesus bade his disciples embark in order to return to Capernaum. Having sent them away, he dismissed the multitude, and went away alone upon a mountain to pray. He sought silent communion with his Father, rather than a civil crown, as the consummation of that day's labor and achievements.

The disciples sailed along the shore for awhile toward Bethsaida, expecting Jesus to come and embark

with them, after he should dismiss the multitude. But having waited and watched for him in vain, until it was dark, they at length steered across the lake for Capernaum. To their dismay a strong head wind arose; the night grew stormy, and the sea boisterous. Between three and six o'clock in the morning, they were still toiling at their oars, about four miles out, unable either to advance or to return to the shore they had left. In their perplexity, a new terror suddenly arose. Out upon the rough billows appeared the form of a man, walking upon the water. Doubting not that the apparition was a spirit, sent, perhaps, to trouble them, the terrified disciples cried out from fear. But in answer to their cry, a well-known voice replied, "It is I, be not afraid."

Peter overjoyed cries out, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water;" and he said, "come." With more zeal and self-confidence than true faith, the headlong Peter leaps overboard and begins to advance. But the wind and the waves overcome his faith, he begins to sink, and cries again, "Lord, save me." Jesus catches the sinking disciple, reproves him for his doubting, and with him enters the ship. At once the winds blow fair, the storm abates, and they are drifted to their desired haven. Wind and wave are obedient to him who walks upon the billows; all goes well when Christ is in the ship.

Owing, perhaps, to their fear and personal interest, this miracle of walking the sea and stilling the

tempest, more powerfully impressed the twelve than had the miracle of the preceding evening. Deeply agitated they worship him, saying, "of a truth thou art the Son of God."

Landing after day-break, upon the western shore of Gennesaret, Jesus is recognized by the people, and the scenes of former days are re-enacted.

Wherever he goes, into city, village, or country, he is met by the eager populace bringing their sick and infirm, filling at times the streets where he is to pass, and entreating that they may touch, "if it were but the border of his garment. And as many as touched him were made whole."

[John 6, 22 : 71 ; 7 : 1.]

On the next day after the miraculous feeding of the multitude, east of Gennesaret, they were at a loss to account for Christ's disappearance ; they had seen the disciples go off without him, and were not aware of his departure during the night.

Full of enthusiasm, and eager to witness new miracles, they diligently sought him. Unable to find him east of the lake, many of them obtained a passage across to Capernaum, probably upon boats that had come up from Tiberias. Continuing their search, they at length found Jesus in the synagogue at Capernaum, and enquired with much apparent interest when he had come across the lake.

Jesus, aware of the superficiality of their attach-

ment, instead of welcoming them as they hoped, immediately began to reprove their selfishness and carnal views. "Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracle, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." He counsels them to seek not perishing meat, but to labor "for that which endureth unto everlasting life; which the Son of Man," whom the Father has "sealed" (impressed his seal upon him as divine), shall give unto them.

To the question of some one, what they must do "to work the works of God?" how they may secure the bread of life (perhaps anticipating that Christ would prescribe new rites and formalities), he replies, "Believe on him whom he hath sent." A true faith in Christ is the substance of all religion.

But they are not ready to believe with a true faith; their carnal enthusiasm has been cooled, and they ask for some surer sign that he is the Son of God. They had not seen the bread rain down out of heaven, as did the manna for their fathers. A stupid people with no affinity for spiritual things may admire miracles; but no true faith will be engendered in such minds by them; they will still clamor for "signs."

Endeavoring to awaken more spiritual desires, Christ more directly presents himself to them as the true, heaven-descended bread. But they are perplexed and offended that he, whom they had known as "the carpenter's son," should talk of having come down from heaven. He then proceeds to show them

the reason of their obtuseness and incredulity. They need a new disposition of heart, and an inward drawing of the Father. They must be taught of God and obey his call; not carnally waiting to see him by the bodily eye, but by a higher longing and spiritual appropriation of Christ as the living bread, becoming partakers of the heavenly life.

As they pervert and take in a carnal sense the remark of Christ, that he would give his flesh for the life of the world, he repeats more forcibly, that unless they eat his flesh and drink his blood, they can have no true life; unless they receive that divine life secured by his self-sacrifice, his death, and live upon him by a free and constant participation of his spirit, they can not have any spiritual life.

But the carnal hearers can not conceive how Christ could have come from heaven as bread for them. It is a "hard (absurd) saying, who can hear it?" Knowing their perplexity and vexation Christ intimates that they may yet see him again ascend to heaven.

This might have convinced them that he meant no carnal eating of his flesh; particularly as he remarks that his words are spirit and life; to be taken spiritually, not literally and carnally. "The flesh," says he, "profiteth nothing." A literal, carnal interpretation of these words is valueless. Hence, the natural inference that he meant not a literal eating of his flesh, but a spiritual appropriation of himself as an atonement for sin, and the imparter of divine life.

Christ probably desired to sift his followers, and hence presented such truth, and in such forms, as to attract more strongly his true disciples, and to repulse the selfish and carnal.

This was the result. Many "went back and walked no more with him."

In view of their apostacy, Christ afterward asks the twelve whether they will also forsake him? And in reply to Peter's assurance that they had the witness of his Messiahship, he tells them that one of them is false, "one of you is a devil." This shows that Christ, at this time, knew the true character and prospective end of Judas. The assurance, given in such strong language, of the hypocrisy of one of them, might have led to such a self-examination as would have resulted in the repentance of Judas, had he not been indeed "a devil."

The great falling off, occasioned by the above discourse, amongst the followers of Jesus, was a signal for renewed and fiercer persecution on the part of the hostile Jews. Jesus was by this confirmed in his determination to stay away from the present, that is the third, passover at Jerusalem, the centre of pharisaical power and hostility, and to continue his ministry still longer in the north.

The following incident shows the nature of the charges preferred by the Pharisees, and the unshrinking manner in which he met them.

[Matt 15 : 1—20 ; Mark 7 : 1—23.]

The slight regard paid to pharisaical traditions by Christ and his disciples was the greatest vexation to his enemies. Seeing the disciples go to the table without first washing their hands, which the Pharisees enjoined as a religious duty, some of them from Jerusalem make complaint to Christ, and demand a reason for such lawlessness. His reply is a severe thrust at their whole system of formalism and hypocrisy. They asked, why his disciples transgressed "the traditions of the elders?" "Why," asks he, "do ye trangress the commandments of God by your traditions," "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." As a specimen of their transgressions, he cites the device by which they encouraged ingratitude and cruelty to parents, justifying a child in withholding the means of sustenance from needy parents, in order to make showy sacrifices and gifts for the temple. "And," he adds, "many such like things ye do."

Then turning to the people, he warns them against the senseless formalism of the times, telling them that what comes out of a man defiles him, not what enters into him.

Afterwards, the disciples came to Jesus, telling him that the Pharisees had taken offence at this remark, and desiring for themselves an explanation of his meaning. Even they were yet, to some extent, in bondage to tradition.

As to the Pharisees, said he, "let them alone."

Every plant not of the Father's planting shall be rooted up. And such are they. "Blind leaders of the blind," they and their followers shall fall.

But he expressed surprise that the disciples could not understand his remark. Perceive ye not, that what a man eats goes not into his heart, affects not his inner life; but that out of his heart come all vile defilements and wickedness?

# PERIOD V.

## FROM THE THIRD PASSOVER TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.

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The absence from Galilee of many of the people at the time of the passover, and the alienation of many who had pretended to be his friends, gave Christ an opportunity to retire with his disciples to more remote districts. This he desired in order to have more private communion with them and complete their instructions, and also to avoid meeting Herod; perhaps, also, he desired for awhile to come less in contact with the hostile pharisaic party, and slightly to extend his mission into the more obscure regions.

We find him soon with his disciples traversing the Mediterranean shore, in the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon. Of the many rich conversations enjoyed by the disciples during this journey, or of the great thoughts that swelled the bosom of Jesus as he looked westward over that sea which a Paul was afterwards to traverse for his sake, no record remains. Only one

incident of the journey is recorded, the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter.

[Matt. 15 : 21—28 ; Mark 7 : 24—30.]

The fame of Jesus had preceded him, and even in Tyre and Sidon he could not remain unobserved.

A heathen woman of that region, who had a demoniacal daughter, heard of him, and sought him in behalf of her child. Christ desiring not to attract attention in that place, at first paid her no attention. When she followed them perseveringly, crying, "O Lord, Son of David, have mercy!" the disciples requested Jesus to send her away. Then he said to her in caustic language, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs."

These severe words were not uttered without a reason. Christ had, on former occasions, relieved heathen sufferers; and, although his personal labors were to be mainly restricted to the Israelites, yet he had no bitter and exclusive prejudice against others. Probably when he made this remark, he designed to gratify her desire. But he would first try her faith and humility, and secure from her an expression of meekness and confidence that should be instructive to the disciples, and memorable for all time.

Conscious of her inferiority, and full of reverence for Christ as the representative of God, instead of going away discouraged, grieved, or angered by his sharp remark, the woman answered meekly, "Truth,

Lord," the dogs should not have the children's bread, "yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." May not even we have a crumb of mercy? This was enough. Jesus now replied, "O woman, great is thy faith;" "for this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter." At the same time, as she learned upon returning home, "her daughter was made whole."

Thus Christ again showed his disciples that humble faith is the condition of acceptance with God; and that this faith is as acceptable in a Syrophenician woman as in the most favored son of Abraham.

[Matt. 15: 29—38; Mark 7: 31—37; 8: 1—9.]

Returning from the region of Tyre, Jesus, as if still to avoid the domains of Herod, passed into Decapolis, a small, independent State, lying south-east of the Sea of Galilee. Seeking retirement, he went upon a mountain; but this was too near the theatre of his former labors for him to remain unvisited. The story of the Gadarene demoniac, and probably the report of all his miracles in Galilee, had penetrated the region; and, consequently, Christ soon found himself again surrounded by multitudes, bringing to him the sick and infirm of every order. Again he resumed his wonderful deeds of mercy. The first miracle performed here, at this time, deserves special notice, on account of the manner in which it was per-

formed. The subject was a deaf man, who "had an impediment in his speech." Mark says, that Jesus "took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue, and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, be opened." Immediately "his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain."

As Jesus now desired retirement, and enjoined upon the man and his friends not to tell of the cure, it seems probable that he took the man aside and used the manipulations and signs mentioned, in order to diminish somewhat their astonishment, by exhibiting something approaching, in appearance, the use of material means; which still were evidently inadequate to the result, without a supernatural agency.

But his injunction of secrecy caused the greater publicity; and as he would never refuse a deed of mercy when sought for in faith, miracle followed miracle, until the people "glorified the God of Israel," saying, "He hath done all things well."

It was soon reported far and near where Jesus was, and visitors thronged to him from a distance. Three days the eager multitude lingered about him forgetful of their common wants. Indeed, the number in attendance, which had now reached "four thousand, besides women and children," was too great to admit of any natural supply of food out there upon the desolate mountain.

Christ's sympathy for them in these circumstances was the occasion of his working another miracle very much like that wrought a short time before, near Bethsaida-Julius.

By the multiplication of seven loaves and a few fishes that were found amongst the company, he satisfied the hunger of the vast assembly, and seven baskets of fragments remained.

[Matt. 15: 39; 16: 1—4; Mark 8: 10—12.]

After feeding and dismissing the multitude in Decapolis, Jesus with his disciples passed over the lake westward and northward to Magdala, a village four miles north of Tiberias. Here they were met and worried by a company of sceptical Pharisees and Sadducees, who wished Jesus to give them some astounding "sign from heaven." Sighing deeply at the repetition of such stupid and carnal demands, and the obstinate unbelief of those who made them, he gave them only a sharp rebuke, and left them.

[Matt 16: 4—12; Mark 8: 13—21.]

Again embarking in their little vessel, Christ and his disciples steer across the lake to the vicinity of Bethsaida-Julius. This is the commencement of a tour northward into the region of Cesarea Phillippi.

As they approach the north-eastern shore of the lake, it occurs to them that they have forgotten to bring with them the desirable quantity of provisions;

a single loaf or cake, insufficient for a meal, being all that is found amongst them.

The mind of Jesus is occupied with thoughts of the Pharisees whom he had met at Magdala, and taking a figure from the topic on which the disciples were conversing, he bids them beware of the "leaven" of the Pharisees. Their dulness in not perceiving the purport of his remark leads him to remind them of his ability to furnish bread as he had done for the multitudes; and to intimate the greater importance of solicitude respecting the sentiments with which their minds should be leavened. They should be on their guard against the specious pretences of pharisaical enemies.

[Mark 8 : 22—26.]

Leaving the lake, the travellers proceeded next to Bethsaida, the first town on their way to Cesarea Phillippi. There a blind man was brought to Jesus, and a cure solicited. Taking the man out of the town, to avoid publicity, and as in the case of the deaf Decapolitan performing certain manipulations, he partially restored his sight. Enquiring of the man whether he saw anything, he replied, "I see men as trees walking." Then putting his hands again upon him he gave him perfect vision, and sent him home, enjoining upon him not to tell any in the town what had been done for him. The transaction was evidently managed so as to avoid publicity and further detention at Bethsaida.

[Matt. 16: 13—20; Mark 8: 27—30; Luke 9: 18—21.]

As they journeyed northward, Jesus enquired of the disciples what opinion the people, amongst whom they had travelled on their mission, held respecting himself. The reply was, that some regarded him as John the Baptist, others as Elias, and others still supposed that one of the old prophets had arisen.

This shows that Christ was at that time held in very high estimation, even by those who had no conception of his real character. The old prophets were regarded by all as the first of men.

After giving the opinions of "the people, the apostles were asked their own opinion respecting Jesus. Peter replied for himself and the others, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

This prompt and unqualified avowal of his faith secured for Peter the warm approbation of Jesus. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." This faith is an inner revelation from God. Only an inner communion with the divine spirit reveals Christ's true character. Peter had attained an intuition of the divine life, and hence Christ proceeded to promise him the honor of being the founder of the Christian church, and the first preacher of the gospel to the world, so far as merely human agency was concerned. And as the first preacher, Peter should have the keys of the visible kingdom or church. He should (loose) proclaim pardon to those who rightly

received the message of the gospel; and (bind) virtually pronounce the condemnation of those who rejected it. Although the disciples were convinced of the Messiahship of Jesus, they had very erroneous views respecting the nature of that Messiahship. To prevent the excitement and political manœuvres which might result from wrong notions respecting the office of Messiah, he commanded his disciples not to tell any man that he was the Christ.

He thus confirmed the faith of the disciples, admitting that he was the Anointed, but enjoined silence respecting this truth until they should have more correct views of his plan. In order to correct their apprehensions, he proceeded next to instruct them in respect to his anticipated sufferings and death.

[Matt. 16: 21—28; Mark 8: 31—38; 9: 1; Luke 9: 22—27.]

Peter heard with astonishment from the lips of Jesus that he should "suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Influenced by his love for the person of Jesus, and by his worldly expectations, more than by correct views of his mission, and humble submission to his superior wisdom, the rash disciple exclaimed, "Far be it from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." This inconsiderate exclamation brought upon Peter a rebuke as pungent as the previous commendation had been flattering.

Regarding Peter's zeal and attitude as designed to

turn him away from the great object of his mission, Christ replied to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me." Mere human affection, though devoted to the person of Jesus, must not be suffered to oppose the faithful discharge of duty.

Turning then to the whole body of the disciples, Jesus taught them that not only must he suffer, but whoever would follow him as a true disciple, must be prepared to renounce all things else and bear persecution and death for Jesus' sake. The disciple is not called to ease and power, but to a life of toil and self-denial. The world, its favor and fortune, honors and emoluments, stand opposed to the life of the soul. Only they who are prepared to suffer with Christ here, and await his second coming for the reward, can be admitted into his kingdom. Triumph comes after conquest. And, for their encouragement, he adds, that the time is not distant when the kingdom of God shall come in victorious power.

[Matt. 17: 1—13; Mark 9: 2—13; Luke 9: 28—36.]

The next recorded incident in our history occurred about a week after the above conversation on a mountain, probably in the region of Cesarea Phillippi.

Jesus had retired to the mountain with Peter, James, and John, for private devotion. A mountain-solitude was his favorite resort. The grandeur and silence of such a place were most concordant with his exalted thoughts and holy feelings. Here could he

most freely commune with the Father. Who knows what scenes of holy converse were witnessed by the mountains to which Christ resorted? The three disciples named above were permitted to witness one of those scenes, and testify of its splendor. One glance was given them into the otherwise unseen glory that belonged to the incarnate Son of God.

The three, destitute of the ardent devotion of their Master, fell asleep while he continued his prayer. Aroused at length they saw, as in a dream, the face of their Master radiant, and his very garments glistening white as the light. Anon, two men stood by him conversing upon the subject of which Jesus had recently spoken to them, his sufferings and death, which were ere long to be accomplished at Jerusalem.

The surprised and bewildered spectators gazed in silence until the men, whom they learn to be Moses and Elias, departed. Peter half unconsciously exclaimed upon their departure, "Master, it is good for us to be here," and proposed to erect tabernacles for Christ, Moses, and Elias.

While he spake, a new surprise appeared. A "bright cloud" settled down and enveloped them; and out of the cloud broke the voice of the Unseen, saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear him."

At sound of this voice, the already trembling disciples fell prostrate, and heard and saw no more, till Jesus approached and said, "Be not afraid." Encouraged thus, they "lifted up their eyes;" the cloud

and the voice had passed, and they were again alone in the silent night with their divine Lord.

Thus the Father with an audible voice testified to these disciples, as he had before done to the Baptist, that Jesus was peculiarly his Son. This testimony had great weight with the hearers. But as Jesus desired that his divinity should be known as yet only by those who possessed susceptibility of soul to appreciate him, as they descended the next day from the mountain, he charged them to "tell no man what they had seen" and heard, until after he should rise from the dead. The narrative states, that this injunction was strictly obeyed, though they could not at this time conceive "what the rising from the dead should mean."

Another difficulty existing in the minds of these disciples was at that time proposed to Christ for solution. How is the Messiahship of Jesus to be reconciled with the fact that "Elias must first come?" To this it was replied, that the prediction of the coming of Elias was already fulfilled. "Elias has come already" (in the person of John the Baptist), "and they know him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed; likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them." These disciples had not before understood that John answered the prediction of Malachi, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

This prediction was probably suggested by the appearance of Elijah at the transfiguration, and their enquiry respecting it answered as above.

[Matt. 17 : 14—21; Mark 9 : 14—29; Luke 9 : 37—13.]

When Jesus and the three that were with him came down to the other disciples, they found there a great multitude of people in a state of high excitement. The cause of the gathering and the agitation was the presence of a father with a demoniacal son, whom the disciples were unable to cure. The failure of the disciples encouraged certain scribes present, and at the moment of Christ's approach they were pressing the disciples with severe questions. The sudden appearance of Jesus at this juncture relieved the disciples and turned the attention of the crowd to him. Around him they all spontaneously gathered, some anticipating a miracle, and others desiring to see a failure on the part of the Saviour. The anxious father humbly and earnestly entreated Jesus, if he could, to heal his son. The manner in which he speaks indicated some doubt in his mind relative to the ability of Christ. Hence, the latter answered with somewhat of rebuke, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible." The danger lies not on the side of Christ, but on that of the other party: is there faith adequate to such a work? Humbled and anxious the father cried out, with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." This was the feeling Christ

desired. Meantime the multitude came "running together," with increasing excitement; but suddenly they were silenced, and heard with breathless interest that calm voice of power saying, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him!" With a shriek the demoniac fell and struggled in a fierce paroxysm. That past, "he was as one dead; but Jesus took him by the hand, and he arose."

This case was peculiarly severe; it was also of long standing, even "from a child" he had been subject to paroxysms. Hence, for effecting a miraculous cure, a very strong exercise of faith was needed. The disciples could not cast out this spirit for want of such a faith, as Christ afterwards told them. "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." They needed to increase their faith by acts of devotion and quiet meditation. Had you but faith enough, says Christ, you might by a word remove this mountain from its place. Of course this remark applied only to those who were the chosen organs of the spirit, commissioned to work miracles in confirmation of the gospel.

[Matt. 17: 22, 23; Mark 9: 30—32; Luke 9: 43—45.]

Leaving the region of Cesarea Phillippi, Jesus with his company again returned as privately as possible into Galilee, continuing the instruction and training of his disciples.

In his remarks, he now referred frequently to his

approaching sufferings; and did it in such a manner as deeply to affect his followers, although they could not understand the true import of his prediction. They saw, as through a mist, a grim conflict advancing, but "feared to ask him respecting it." The thought of his death, though coupled by him at this time with the promise of a resurrection within three days, came over them with chilling severity, and they but shuddered in silence, afraid to know the particulars of what seemed to them monstrous, if not impossible.

[Matt. 17 : 24—27 ; Mark 9 : 33.]

A curious and significant incident occurred upon their arrival at Capernaum, where we next find our little company of Galileans. For some reason, perhaps on account of the attendant throng, Jesus and some of the disciples had not paid the tribute-money which was expected every spring from every loyal Jew, for the temple-service.

Upon their return to Capernaum, the collector asked Peter whether or not his Master would pay it. Peter answered in the affirmative, and immediately went to the house where Jesus was, to ask him about it. Knowing his errand, Jesus anticipated his questions by asking him whether the kings of the earth take tribute from their own children or from strangers?" "From strangers," replies Peter. "Then," says Jesus, "are the children free." That is, Christ being head of the theocracy, and "greater than the

temple," was under no obligation to contribute to the support of that service which he was himself to supersede. Had he been recognized as Messiah, he would not have been called upon for tribute. Nevertheless, says he, "lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up: and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money; that take and give unto them for me and thee." Christ would not insist upon his abstract rights, when his motives might be impugned, and evil result. He would encourage Peter to "fulfil all righteousness," and though pennyless, go forward, and trust Providence to furnish the stater required for tribute.

[Matt. 18: 1—9; Mark 9: 33—48; Luke 9: 46—50.]

Despite the rich instructions given by Christ to his disciples, they still had imperfect views of his plan, and cherished selfish and foolish dreams of aggrandizement in his kingdom. Their success while on their trial-mission, and their recent failure in the case of the demoniac, probably led them to dispute as they came to Capernaum, respecting their comparative power and efficiency, and the relative positions they should occupy in Messiah's kingdom.

Christ took occasion soon after to question them respecting this childish dispute, and to expose the inconsistency of such a spirit, and its hostility to the true kingdom of God. Taking a little child he pre-

sented it to them as the model of a true disciple; telling them that "whoever should be most humble and unassuming, most child-like, should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Moreover their deeds were meritorious only when prompted by love to him. Hence, that one is my friend, says Christ, who, for my sake, acts the part of servant to a child. "Whoso shall receive one such little child in my name, receiveth me; and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me." Whoever, from faith in Christ and love to him, performs deeds of kindness to his children, shall in return receive God as his portion. And the least (humblest) of Christ's disciples shall be greatest in his kingdom.

The stress laid by Christ upon doing things in his name, probably led John to suggest at this time an incident which had recently occurred. "Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us."

The success of the twelve had induced others to attempt the expulsion of evil spirits in Christ's name. This displeased the disciples, and they protested against it. But the question now arose in John's mind, whether they had done right. Jesus told him not to forbid such an one. The success of his efforts proved that God was with him. "He that is not against us is for us." If not a true disciple as yet, he may become one. Let no one be discouraged whose aim and tendencies are favorable. Be it that

he follows not with us, belongs not to our society or communion, "there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me." Is the man's heart in harmony with Christ, and is he working for the same great ends for which we should work? If so, forbid him not. Christ sanctions no sectarianism; nor does he despise those who have not yet attained to the position of perfect men in him. Hence, says he, "it were better for him who shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me (discourage a trembling saint, or seeker after truth) that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea." Offences will come (to the children of Christ), "but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh!" Hence he proceeds to exhort them to guard against suffering offences. Better cut off a hand, pluck out an eye, and enter heaven halt and maimed, than be cast whole and sound into "the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not;" so grievous a sin is it to cause any child of God to go astray.

[Matt. 18: 15—17.]

In the same connection, Christ gave that beautiful, just, and unalterable law for the settlement of differences between Christian brethren. If a brother trespass against thee, go to him alone, and, if possible, bring him to terms. If this fail, take one or two witnesses; if he is still obstinate, tell it to the church;

and if he will not listen to the church, count him a heathen.

[Matt. 18: 21—35.]

Hereupon Peter enquired respecting the law of forgiveness. How often must I forgive an offending brother, "seven times?" Jesus answered, "Not seven, but seventy times seven." The duty of forgiveness was then illustrated by the parable of the servant who was forgiven by his Lord; but who afterward cruelly treated a fellow-servant who was unable to pay him a slight due.

The import of the parable is, that any injury a brother may do to us is slight and trifling compared with our sins against God, and hence we ought to be ever ready to do to an offending brother as God does to us, forgive his trespasses.

The man in the parable recalled his pardon when he learned the implacable character of the servant, and "delivered him to the tormentors till he should pay the debt." "So also shall my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

[Luke 10: 1—16; Matt. 10: 16—42; Matt. 11: 20—24.]

About half of the last year of Christ's public ministry had now passed. The month of October had arrived, and he determined to attend the feast of tabernacles at Jerusalem, and seek an opportunity to

confirm the faith of those who had been inclined to him in Judea. He was aware that his ministry would terminate the next spring, and that what was to be done before his death must be done quickly. As he looked abroad over the field of his labors, and of the world, he was deeply impressed by the vast amount of effort that would be needed to evangelize such a field. In beautiful and expressive language, he said to his disciples, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."

In order to make his remaining efforts more efficient, he determined to send before him a number of heralds, who should, as the twelve had done, proclaim the approach of the Messianic kingdom, and confirm their testimony by miracles.

Seventy of the more reliable of his followers were now commissioned and sent out. The number seventy was significant amongst the Hebrews, and Christ may have fixed upon it on that account.

The instructions given to these licentiates are not clearly distinguished by the Evangelists from those given to the twelve on a similar occasion. Matthew seems to have blended the two together in his account of the sending out of the latter. In general the purport of their commission is the same. But as the hostility to Christ and his followers was increasing, it seems more consistent to refer what is said respecting opposition and persecution mostly to this occasion.

The seventy, like the twelve, were to go without money or provisions, relying upon the generosity of those to whom they should preach to supply their wants. They were to make the same proclamation, and confirm their commission by similar deeds. When they entered a city, they were to stop wherever an invitation was given, and there abide, not wandering about from house to house. If any city refused them hospitality, they should wipe off the dust of their feet, as a testimony against it, and go to another.

When arraigned and persecuted, they should feel nc anxiety respecting their defence, for, says Christ, "it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Persecution they must expect. Christ came not to bring peace to those who remain in sin. His gospel will excite hatred and revenge. The irreligious will persecute unto death even their own relatives, parents, children, and companions, who may embrace Christianity. Hence, he forewarns the seventy, and through them all true disciples, that they must be ready to suffer for his sake, or they can not be his. Whoever will not bear the cross with him can not share in his triumph and kingdom.

But there was one great encouragement to offset against this. Though going forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, the Shepherd's eye would be ever upon them. That particular Providence which suffers not a spar-

row to fall unmarked would number the very hairs of their heads, and guard them with a Father's care. Therefore, says he, fear not them which kill the body, and can do no more; fear only him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

The persecutors shall be brought to account; and all to whom they preach shall be judged according to the reception they give to Christ's ambassadors, and the truth which they preach.

Having thus commissioned the seventy, Christ prepared for his final departure from Galilee. Tumultuous and sorrowful thoughts swelled his bosom as he cast his eye over the lake of Galilee, to the cities around it, where he had done so many mighty works. Here he had expended most of his ministry, and though some few hundreds had believed, the results were by no means proportioned to the expenditure. Glancing prophetically forward, he contemplates the desolation which should ere long come upon these cities for their wickedness, and utters that bodeful doom which time has seen fulfilled. "Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida! and thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sack-cloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you." The vain search of travellers after even the ruins of these cities

tells us how low they have sunk, and how true was the Saviour's prediction.

[John 7 : 2—10; Luke 9 ; 51—56 ; Luke 18 : 11—19.]

The relatives of Jesus, who were as yet sceptical respecting his Messiahship, were now preparing to attend the feast of tabernacles, and urged Jesus to accompany them and exhibit his skill and power before the whole nation. Why, said they, should you remain in this obscure region? If you are what you pretend, and if you expect to be received as such, show yourself to the world.

To this Jesus replied that his time had not yet come. They could go up to the feast without fear; the world would find no fault with them; but he had his own plans, and was not on so favorable terms with the world. He bore testimony against its evil works, and hence it hated him. Although he would not shrink from persecution, he would not needlessly push himself into danger, or wantonly provoke persecution.

Hence, after the departure of his brethren, he delayed a few days longer in Galilee. He knew what awaited him in Judea, but resolved not to avoid it.

A few days after their departure, he set out for Jerusalem with the twelve, taking the more unusual route through Samaria.

Here end the labors and sojourn of Christ in Galilee.

One or two incidents occurred in his passage through Samaria, worthy of note.

One Samaritan village refused him lodging and common hospitality because he was going to attend the Jewish festival. This treatment so exasperated the disciples who were with him, that they desired to call down fire from heaven and destroy the place. Christ, however, in his characteristic manner, rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." With this reproof he passed on to seek shelter elsewhere.

Upon approaching another village of Samaria they were accosted by ten lepers, who "stood afar off, and lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" To their entreaty Jesus simply replied, "Go, show yourselves to the priests," as those were wont to do who were cured of this disease, in order to get a certificate of the cure. Encouraged by his direction to hope for a cure, the ten immediately set out for the temple, and soon perceived that their disease had passed away. One of them, who was a Samaritan, immediately turned back to thank the Saviour and glorify God for his goodness.

The gratitude of this Samaritan, in contrast with the indifference of the others, who were probably Jews, was used by Christ to counteract the increased prejudice of the disciples against the

Samaritans, on account of the inhospitable treatment they had received at the other village. "The ten were cleansed, but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger."

# PERIOD VI.

## FROM THE LAST FEAST OF TABERNACLES TO THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM.

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[John 7: 11—53; 8: 1.]

MANY enquiries were made for Christ, at Jerusalem, by those who came to attend the feast. He was now the great object of interest for the nation. Curiosity and vulgar wonder led many to desire to see him. The indignant Pharisees heard him spoken of on all sides.

Suddenly, about the fourth day of the feast, the voice of Jesus was heard in the temple in public address. He had come in a manner calculated not to attract attention; yet he would not shrink from his enemies, but took a position adapted to elicit their hostility. The auditors were surprised at his masterly exposition of scripture; and even the unbelieving wondered how one who had not been educated in the schools could exhibit such knowledge.

In answer to their surprise and enquiries, Jesus

told them that his doctrine was not of human origin. He uttered not his own human wisdom, but the divine revelation of God; as any one would discover who would obey his precepts.*

As soon as the Pharisees learned that Jesus was present, and that the people were disposed to regard him as the great prophet, if not the very Messiah that was promised in prophecy, they commissioned officers to arrest him on the old charge of sabbath-breaking.

These officers mingled in the congregation to which Jesus discoursed, and listened to him, keeping their design a secret. Aware of their presence and aims, he took occasion to expose their folly and wickedness.

Judge not, says he, according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment. From pretended zeal for the law of Moses ye seek to kill me, for healing upon the sabbath, while yourselves perform circumcision upon that day. Some of the hearers sneeringly enquire, who seeks to kill him? others, aware of the movement of the Pharisees, wonder whether the rulers indeed know that this is the Christ; feeling for the moment that his boldness and his wisdom prove him divine. But they have no well grounded faith, and soon fall back upon their prejudices. After all it

* The order of events and discourses is somewhat confused and uncertain in this period; and our arrangement of materials must be somewhat arbitrary. The Evangelists evidently did not record the discourses of Christ precisely in the order of their delivery.

can not be Messiah, for "we know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is;" supposing that Messiah would suddenly appear in some astounding manner which would preclude all doubt of his divinity.

Aware of these cavils, Jesus exclaims, "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am;" yet ye know not him that sent me. They knew his human origin, but not his divine. In their carnal pride they thought they knew him, yet, in reality, they knew him not.

Here an effort was made to arrest Jesus, but the officers were so deeply impressed by his discourse, and the people were so generally in his favor, that no one had courage to lay a hand upon him. At the same time, by his calm demeanor defying their designs, he tells them that for a time he shall be with them; but that a time is coming when they shall seek him in vain, and be unable to come to the place where he shall be. This they stupidly interpret to be a threat that he will leave Jewry and teach the Gentiles. Thus they fail to understand the warning given them of a time when in trouble they should long in vain for his deliverance.

Such discourses were delivered day after day during the remainder of the feast. It was the last great festival of the nation which the Saviour was to observe with them, and his anxiety seemed constantly increasing to lead them to receive him as their spiritual life. Hence, he continued his discourses present-

ing himself in various attitudes, as the light of the world, the object of highest value.

On the eighth, or last day of the feast, he "stood and cried," saying, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Faith in me shall be to you a fountain of life. My indwelling spirit shall ever quench the thirst of the soul that possesses it.

The feast ended, and still he went on publicly discoursing. Some of the people declared that he must be the Christ; others declared that the Christ must come out of Bethlehem, whereas this man was from Galilee; and thus they disputed and divided, and no one ventured to seize him.

Vexed that he should thus proceed, the Pharisees angrily demanded of the officers why they have not arrested him? They can only reply that, "never man spake like this man." Hereupon they are still more enraged at what they call the stupidity of the ignorant. "Have any of the rulers or Pharisees believed on him?" This ignorant people are cursed! But even of their own number there are some who cherish a secret faith in him. Such is Nicodemus, who now enquires whether their law judges any one without a fair trial? This turns suspicion upon him, and the sneering question follows, "art thou also of Galilee?" Two parties seem to be forming in the Sanhedrim, and without further action at present, they break up in dissatisfaction.

[John. 8: 2—11.]

On the evening of the last day of the feast, Jesus retired to the Mount of Olives to spend the night. Returning to the temple early in the morning, a crowd of people again collected to hear him. Meantime his enemies, aware that they must involve him in some deeper snare, and secure more popular accusations in order to turn the people against him before they could crush him, came to him with an artifice by which they hoped, from his known mildness toward sinners, to get him to take a stand against the law of Moses. Bringing to him a woman taken in adultery, they tell him that Moses commands that such persons be stoned: "but what sayest thou?"

Unwilling to participate in civil or judicial affairs, which he ever declared to be out of his province, Christ at first paid no attention to them. But when they continued to insist upon an expression of his sentiments respecting the case, he at last rose up before them, and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her."

This was no legal decision of her deserts; but an appeal on the moral bearing of the case to the consciences of her accusers, which might both incline them to leniency, and lead them to feel their own need of clemency. The effect was electrical; the haughty and expectant countenances fell; no other word was spoken by the Saviour, who stooped down and seemed to be indifferently writing upon the ground. One

after another the conscience-smitten and crest-fallen accusers of the woman disappeared, till she was left alone with Jesus, in the midst of the congregation. Admonishing her to sin no more, he sent her away, refusing to pass legal sentence against her.

[John. 8: 12—59.]

Resuming his discourse to the people, Jesus proclaims himself to them as the light of the world, the light of life, by which alone the soul can be raised from darkness and death. Here he is interrupted by some Pharisees present, who assert that his pretensions are inadmissible because he bears witness for himself.

To this he replies, that the testimony which he offers in his own behalf is true, as it results from a higher than human consciousness, which they as mere men can not understand. Moreover he has other testimony. The Father not only grants him an inward assurance of his divinity, but also objectively and independently testifies for him in the miraculous works by which he confirms his mission. Incapable, however, of appreciating these remarks, the Pharisees stupidly ask, "Where is thy Father?" They can accept no witness unless he be present to the carnal eye. Jesus replies, "Ye neither know me nor my Father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." To know Christ is to know God; the Father lives through the Son.

This was an evident assumption of divinity, such as they accounted blasphemy; but so profound was the impression made by his preaching, that they dared not lay hands upon him. Hence, he proceeds again, with evident allusion to their machinations, to tell them that the time is coming when they shall seek him as a deliverer, but shall not find him. He shall return above from whence he came. But they of the earth, earthy, shall die in their sins, and go downward.

And, he adds, "when ye have lifted up the Son of Man," after ye shall crucify me, or possibly after you have caused me to ascend up from whence I came, "then shall ye know that I am he," the Son of God. When ye shall see my work extending by means of its inherent life, after my death and ascension, then shall those of you who are susceptible of spiritual impressions be convinced of my divinity.

With such bold and convincing arguments, Christ silenced his learned opposers, and attained the confidence of the common people, who had never before seen the Pharisees and scribes put down by one who seemed to be of their own rank. But amongst the professed converts of this period were many who had no adequate views of Christian discipleship, and were liable to be led astray.

Hence, Christ next directed his remarks to such persons, telling them that they could only be truly his disciples by a steadfast adherence to his word. Only

by continued obedience can you know the truth, and attain that freedom which it is designed to impart.

Freedom was the boast of the Hebrews, and the remark of Christ that they should attain freedom through the truth at once aroused their pride, and, though conscious of political subjection to the Romans, they haughtily reply, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage." This carnal interpretation of his words led Jesus more fully to demonstrate their spiritual bondage, in contrast with that inner freedom communicated by the Son of God through the truth.

Though members of the Hebrew theocracy they were servants of sin; though lineal Hebrews, they were not spiritually children of Abraham, else they would not seek to kill one for telling them the truth. Though nominal worshippers of Jehovah, they were not the children of God, or they would listen to God's truth, and love him who was the manifestation of God on earth. Unbelievers, and imbued with the spirit of murder, they could be, as he told them, only the children of the devil, who "was a murderer from the beginning," and the "father of lies."

This called forth a new burst of indignation. Heaping abuse upon Christ, they next call him contemptuously Samaritan and demon. To this he calmly replies, that he is one who seeks the honor of God, and does not seek his own glory. He will not vindicate himself from their charges. There is One who

will honor him ; One who discriminates character, and who will bring forth judgment. With this remark relative to their abuse and persecution, showing them that they do not alarm him, he proceeds to commend himself to them as the life of the world, "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." They are now almost mad with rage, and again interrupt him, crying out, "Now we know that thou hast a devil! Art thou greater than Abraham, and the prophets who are dead? Whom makest thou thyself?" To this he replies in the same equable tone, that he makes no selfish pretensions. God bestows upon him the honor which he enjoys, that God whom he knows and obeys, but of whom they are ignorant. Never were such cutting sentences so calmly and elegantly delivered. Every word is fire to the listeners. And now comes the climax, when Jesus tells them that even their father Abraham, of whom they boast, rejoiced to see his day. "Thou not yet fifty years old, and hast seen Abraham!" they exclaim in a paroxysm of rage. This was a perversion of his words, which rather imported that Abraham looked longingly forward, desiring to see his advent. But Jesus has no mind to explain and soften down his words. He had yet told them but part of the truth, and he proceeds in the same deliberate style, "Verily, verily, before Abraham was, I am." This was beyond their endurance ; their wrath broke loose in mob-violence ; and they determined to stone him to death on the spot.

But Jesus concealed himself from their sight, passed through their midst, and escaped unharmed.

[Luke 10: 25—37.

After the above discourse, Christ left the temple and probably the city, but he still remained several days in the vicinity of Jerusalem; as appears from the fact that he soon after this healed a blind man in the city. Several incidents are narrated here, the precise time and place of which are not mentioned.

One of these is the question of the lawyer, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" and the delivery of the parable, setting forth the nature of the second table of the law, in reply to his question.

The lawyer (one of a class who restricted themselves to the law, discarding the traditions upon which the Pharisees generally laid so much stress) admitted that all duty was summed up in the two commands of supreme love to God, and equal love for all mankind, but wanted a definition of "neighbor," in the phrase "love thy neighbor as thyself."

Thereupon Christ delivered the parable of the man who fell among thieves; exhibiting the nature of true love for one's neighbor by the sympathy and conduct of the Samaritan, in contrast with the exclusiveness and selfishness of the Priest and Levite, who rendered the unfortunate man no assistance. According to the parable, the love which the law requires is all-pervading, and makes no distinctions of rank or

nation. Every human being who may need our assistance should be regarded as our neighbor.

Luke 10: 38—42.]

Amongst the families who welcomed the Saviour to their hospitality in the vicinity of Jerusalem, none gave him a heartier welcome or were more agreeable and home-like to him than the family of Martha in Bethany. The two sisters and brother, of whom Martha seems to have been the oldest, and perhaps to have owned the house, were all attached to Jesus. A pleasant and instructive anecdote is related of a visit made them by Christ during his present sojourn in Judea.

The familiarity pre-supposed for such an occurrence indicates that a familiar acquaintance already existed between the parties.

Martha, as the mistress of the house, was unduly engrossed in her domestic affairs, while the younger sister, Mary, took her place at Jesus' feet, anxious only to hear him discourse. The former at length made complaint to Jesus that her sister left her "to serve alone." Jesus in reply uttered that mild and famous rebuke, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

In this remark, Christ neither encourages an idly contemplative disposition, nor discourages a proper

attention to our worldly interests. But he beautifully inculcates the importance of making all our procedure subservient to the attainment of "the one thing needful," entire devotion to God.

[Matt. 6: 7—15; Matt. 18: 19, 20; Luke 11: 1—13.]

Some important suggestions on prayer were given to the disciples about this period of Christ's ministry. He had been engaged in prayer some place near Jerusalem. "When he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray (give us a form of prayer) as John also taught his disciples."

In an age of liturgies and formalisms, it was not strange that the disciples asked for forms of prayer. Christ rather designed that they should become possessed of such a spirit as would spontaneously develop its own forms of devotion.

Hence he told them to use no vain repetitions in prayer, and not to expect to be heard for their "much speaking." It is not the words, the form, but the deep yearning of the soul that constitutes true prayer.

He then gives them a brief model, not so much as a standing form of devotion, as an exhibition of the true character and substance of Christian prayer. For brevity, comprehensiveness, and propriety of expression and arrangement, this, called peculiarly the Lord's prayer, is inimitable.

Analysing it we find an invocation, six petitions,

and a doxology. The first three petitions refer to God's glory and the prosperity of his kingdom, the latter three refer severally to our temporal wants, pardon for our sins, and the guidance of the divine spirit. The doxology or conclusion, like the invocation, ascribes all glory to God.

These several parts are arranged in the best conceivable order, and embrace the whole field of devotion.

The invocation beautifully suggests the Christian view of man's relationship to God. We are to pray to no awful Deity enthroned in terrors; to no far off and indifferent being destitute of regard for us in our lowliness; and to no abstract, unconscious principle. But Christian prayer begins with "*Our Father.*" We are, therefore, God's children, heirs with Christ of his kingdom. He is, therefore, a personal being, not merely the *all* of which we are part. He is infinitely above us, removed from us by his exaltation. He is our Father "*in heaven.*"

This exalted, heavenly Father's name we must hallow. His very name should be reverenced by all creatures. And our first desire and petition should be that he may be thus adored by us and by others. Consequent upon this is the advent of his kingdom. When men hallow God's name, they will be his subjects, and his reign will exist in their hearts. For such a coming of God's kingdom into the hearts of men, not for an external theocracy, or some social re-

organization of society, should we pray. Not for forms and professions, but for the doing of God's will should we long. This is the evidence that we hallow his name, and that his kingdom has come into our hearts. Pray, therefore, that mankind may reverence God, submit to his authority, and do his will.

For ourselves we may ask daily bread, the continuance of kind providences and creature comforts.

As sinners we need also forgiveness from God. As we need pardon from each other for injuries mutually committed, and as we forgive those who injure us, so may we hope in God's pardoning mercy. We can hope for forgiveness only when we cherish a forgiving spirit.

And not only do we need pardon for the past, we should pray for deliverance from future evil; not for freedom from all trial. Some of the ills and trials of life are necessary for the development of our characters and the confirmation of our virtues; but we may pray God not to lead us into scenes and circumstances where we shall be tempted above what we in our imperfection can bear. We may and should pray for him to deliver us from the power of evil, or of the evil one; from the dominion of sin, and from the inclination to yield to temptation.

In the same connection, Christ sets forth the importance of confidence and perseverance in prayer. Pray, believing that ye shall receive. God, as a Father, delights in granting the prayers of his chil-

dren. Would a parent give stones, serpents, or scorpions, to the hungry child that cries to him for food? Much less will God refuse his spirit to the child who craves it.

Or would a disobliging neighbor rise in the night and grant a request merely to free himself from the importunity of the petitioner? Much more will God answer "his own elect" who cry night and day unto him with tears. Come to God as to a Father, with the submissiveness and confidence of a child, and you shall not be disappointed.

[Luke 10: 17—24.]

By this time the Seventy who had been sent out to preach and perform miracles, probably along the valley of the Jordan, had worked their way along into Judea. There they again joined Christ, and gave a joyful report of their success. "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name."

Jesus replied that before their return he "saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Their success over evil spirits was but another indication that the dominion of evil was broken, and that the kingdom of God was triumphant; and the triumph of his kingdom was a pledge of the triumph of his servants. Hence, said Christ, "I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy."

At the same time, he cautioned them against being

elated by their success. They should rejoice, not so much in the subjection of evil spirits, as in the establishment of God's kingdom in their hearts, and in the world.

The contemplation of the mission of these simple-hearted disciples, and the thoughts suggested by their report, deeply affected the Redeemer.

He saw in this beginning of missionary effort the first budding promises of success for his cause in the hands of disciples. This was a pledge that they would be true to their calling, and would, after his departure, spread the gospel committed to them.

A peculiar joy thrilled his soul as he thought of these things, and he broke out in a strain of fervent thanksgiving to the Father, who had revealed to these spiritual "babes" that revelation which was hidden from the worldly, wise, and the great of earth. To the disciples he said, "Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see." Kings and prophets desired in vain to behold the advent of Messiah, and the dawn of the spiritual theocracy, and to hear the gospel which is now committed unto you.

[John. 9: 1—14; 10: 1—21.]

An incident occurred at Jerusalem shortly after the return of the Seventy, calculated to increase Christ's notoriety, and the hostility of the Pharisees.

Unable to effect anything against his person, they had sought to limit his influence by terrifying the

people, in order to prevent them from following him. With this design they had published that whoever should confess to a belief in Jesus, should be excluded from the synagogue.

But even this terror to every Jew did not prevent Jesus from gaining new adherents. At the same time he seemed to defy their machinations and opposition, by repeating the deed upon which they ostensibly rested their accusation, healing the infirm upon the sabbath.

At the time now under review, as Jesus and his disciples were passing to or from the temple, they saw a man who had been blind from his birth. Struck by the seeming severity of his affliction, the disciples, in accordance with the false view of God's providential government that prevailed, asked whether the man's blindness was inflicted upon him, on account of his own sins or the sins of his parents, supposing each specific affliction to be sent in consequence of some particular sin.

Christ refuted this view of affliction, and told them that the man was born blind in order that God's saving power might be displayed in him. This seeming misfortune was to furnish occasion for the display of Christ's miraculous power, and for the removal of the man's spiritual blindness; perhaps, also, for the attraction of others to the true light.

"While I am in the world," adds Christ, I am its light; and while the day lasts, I must shine or work.

He then proceeded to give the man sight, as in the case at Bethsaida, by the seeming use of external appliances; guarding only that the external means should be wholly inadequate for the result. No one could claim that an ointment such as he applied, composed of common clay and saliva, washed off with water from the pool of Siloam, could give sight to one who had been born and grown to manhood in blindness.

This miracle produced a great sensation at Jerusalem. The Sanhedrim were infuriated to find Jesus working thus almost before their eyes; and, despite all their efforts, securing a new outburst of popular enthusiasm in his favor.

The firm adherence of the man who had been blind to the truth, and his reproof of their unbelief, foiled their effort to suppress the report of the miracle. The only satisfaction they could get was the excommunication of the poor man for his attachment to the "prophet" who had opened his eyes.

In reference to this case, Christ said afterward, that he came into the world in order "that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind;" in order to give light to those who desire it, and to expose the blindness of those who vainly think themselves children of the light.

Certain Pharisees present, surmising that they were referred to in the latter class, asked Jesus, "Are we blind also?"

To this he replied, in a caustic manner, that if they were blind it would be better for them. Ignorance might be some apology for them, if they were not wilfully blind.

The manner in which Christ addressed the man who had been blind, when he afterwards met him, is noteworthy, "Believest thou on the *Son of God?*" And, as the man did not recognize him, he added "He it is that talketh with thee." This is another assertion of his own divinity.

Alluding to the conduct of the Pharisees toward this poor man, and their disposition to make the flock of God subservient to their own selfish purposes, he delivered the beautiful parable of the shepherd, contrasting the characters of Christ and the Pharisees as spiritual guides.

The church is a fold, believers are the flock, the spiritual guide is a shepherd, and Christ is the door by which both sheep and shepherd should enter the fold. Self-constituted shepherds destitute of a divine calling, who enter not by the true door, are thieves and robbers. The parable is beautiful and impressive when we consider the habits of oriental shepherds. We think of the fold with its single door; of the shepherd whose voice is as familiar to the sheep as a father's to his children; and of the thief clambering over the wall, to the terror of the flock who know not his voice.

Again Christ is more than the door by which to

enter the fold of God; he is also the "good shepherd," in contrast with hirelings and selfish pretenders. Unlike them he seeks only the welfare of the flock, and hazards his life for their defence. A deep, vital sympathy flows between him and his charge. In combat with their enemy he will yield his life; but his fall will be the enemies overthrow and ruin; and the good shepherd will rise again to guard his beloved charge. This prophetic allusion to his death and resurrection led him to look still forward to the ingathering of his church after his departure, and to speak of "other sheep," not of the Hebrew fold, whom also he "must gather." They too "shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

By such discourses some of Christ's hearers were attracted to him and believed. Others who were selfish, vain, and fanatical, saw in him indications of madness, or of demoniacal possession, and grew ever more hostile.

[John 10: 22—42.]

The two months intervening between the feast of tabernacles and the feast of dedication had now passed. Public sentiment was still divided and excited respecting the claims of Jesus. While some firmly believed his divine commission, and others as firmly disbelieved, a large class doubted, and began to grow weary of suspense.

During the feast of dedication, late in December,

as Jesus was one day walking in Solomon's porch, some of this doubting party gathered about him, and insisted upon a definite declaration or denial of his Messiahship.

Knowing that they were not susceptible of any good impressions, and that no further assurance of his divine mission would be of use to them, Jesus replied reprovingly, "I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." What you lack is a heart to believe. "Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep." "My sheep hear my voice, and follow me." They who are given to the good shepherd, and have docile spirits, well know his divinity; and he as well knows them and will guard them. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hands. My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands. I and my Father are one." One in purpose and power to save the elect. Glad of another pretext for opposing him, the Jews took this as a blasphemous assertion of his essential unity with God, and took up stones, resolved summarily to inflict upon him a blasphemer's doom.

His remark did not of necessity imply essential unity with God, but Christ makes no objection to this interpretation of it; and instead of softening down and explaining his remarks, as he would have done if their interpretation was false, he proceeds to justify

his claim to divine appellations. In your scriptures, says he, even distinguished men, who have no claim to a divine commission, are sometimes called Gods; and why may not he, "whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world," much more claim to be Son of God?" Further, he appeals to his miracles as proof that the Father is in him, and he in the Father. And again they make demonstrations of violence; but he escapes unharmed.

His situation now becoming more and more precarious, he determines to leave Judea for awhile, and visit Perea, where formerly John the Baptist, and recently the Seventy, had prepared the way for his effective ministry.

He finds a hearty welcome in Perea. Multitudes resort to him, and many believe, declaring that "John did no miracles, but all things that John spake of this man were true."

[John 11: 1—46.]

Christ's successful labors in Perea were, however, soon interrupted by a message from the sisters of Lazarus, informing him of their brother's dangerous illness, and probably requesting him to visit them. Of course it would be regarded as a request that he would exert his power to save the life of his friend. But Christ was not a physician who must hasten to see his patient before the crisis of the disease. He answered encouragingly that this sickness was "not

unto death," not designed by Providence for the removal of Lazarus from the world, but "that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." This certainly intimated a design to perform some miracle in the case; but as Jesus refused immediately to leave his work, remaining two days longer where he was, it could not be plain to the messenger, nor to the afflicted family, what was his intention.

Meantime Lazarus seems to have died on the day that the messenger started for Jesus. Whether our Lord knew this in a supernatural way, or whether another messenger was despatched after his death who informed Christ of it, we are not informed; but after two days he communicated the fact to the disciples and proposed to return to Judea. The confidence with which he at first spoke of Lazarus' sickness, as designed for a manifestation of his power, seems to indicate that he possessed supernaturally a clear foreknowledge of all that should occur. If so, he probably delayed his journey to Bethany, in order to render the miracle more indisputable and striking, the state of things in Judea seeming to demand a miracle of the highest order, to be wrought under such circumstances that none could deny it. He may also have had important occupation in Perea, which he was unwilling abruptly to leave.

The proposition to return to Judea was received by the disciples with surprise, and they reminded Jesus of the late attempt to stone him. Thomas,

always the most faithless of their number, though sincerely attached to Jesus, not doubting that death awaited his master and perhaps his followers if he returned to the vicinity of Jerusalem, nerved up his courage to say to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." To allay their apprehensions, Jesus tells them that while the day lasts one need not fear to walk abroad; they need not fear while he, their sun, is with them. Even after his departure he would be their guide, and they should walk in his light. His own day was also appointed, and no enemy could prevail until his time should come. Still, he would not return to the scene of danger without reason, and hence he informed them that he was going to awaken their friend Lazarus from his sleep.

At the house of Martha, meanwhile, all is desolate; the brother is dead and buried; the encouragement that seemed to be contained in the reply of Jesus to the messenger seems to have failed. Many sympathising Jews gather in to comfort the mourners; but he whom they most desire to see is thirty miles distant, and seems not disposed to regard them. The sisters are deeply bereaved and disconsolate.

When therefore, upon the fourth day from her brother's death, some one whispers to Martha that Jesus is coming, she hastens out with a full heart to meet him. A faint gleam of hope even now dawns upon her at sight of the Saviour, and she exclaims,

"Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Taking this as an intimation of hope that her brother might yet be restored, Jesus replies, "Thy brother shall rise again." Scarce daring to hope that Christ would perform such a miracle, she expresses her faith in the resurrection at the last day, as if that were the allusion of Jesus. But he, desiring to awaken in her a livelier faith, replies, "I am the resurrection and the life;" I am the author and fountain of life; I hold the power of resurrection. The living who believe in me shall not die, and though he were dead, yet should the believer live.

Though not clearly comprehending Christ's words, Martha now declares her unqualified faith in him as Messiah, her hope is strengthened; and at his suggestion she returns to the house to call her sister. Grief had almost overcome the pensive Mary, and when she reached Jesus she fell sobbing at his feet. The Jews who followed her from the house join her in tears, and the compassionate Saviour himself, moved by their deep grief, groans in spirit, and weeps with the mourners. The pure humanity is not repressed by the divinity with which it is united. Jesus weeps with those who weep.

Some of the spectators see in his tears only the proof of his love for Lazarus. Others somewhat captiously enquire whether "this man who opened

the eyes of the blind" could not have prevented the death of his friend? The giving of sight to the blind man was one of the most recent of Christ's miracles, and perhaps the most striking of any that he had performed in the vicinity of Jerusalem; the restoration of the dead having occurred in Galilee.

By this time Christ has followed the mourners to the tomb, or cave, where Lazarus was buried. When he bids them remove the cover from the grave, Martha's faith fails. "Lord, he has been dead four days!" Reminding her of what he had before said, Jesus, in calm assurance, offers an audible prayer, designed to impress the spectators with the assurance that the power of God was present working through his Son. This done, he approaches, and with a loud voice cries into the tomb, "Lazarus, come forth!" Anon, the dead man starts up, and in his winding-sheet leaps from his grave, and lives before them!

The effect could only be overwhelming upon any of the spectators who were susceptible of any emotions. Many of them, it is said, believed. But those were not wanting who could go even from this exhibition and with cold malice tell the Pharisees that Jesus was at Bethany, and again working his miracles.

[John 11: 47—54.]

So indisputable and astounding was this miracle, and so great its effect upon the community, that a

meeting of the Sanhedrim was immediately convoked by the hostile members, for the purpose of taking more efficient measures for Christ's removal.

"What are we doing?" say they. Despite all our former efforts for his suppression, here he is within two miles of our council room, in open day, before many of our people, multiplying his miracles. "If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him." He will be publicly proclaimed king, and that will draw down the vengeance of Rome upon us, and we shall lose what of independence remains to us. Rage furnishes them wit and eloquence: the miracles can not be denied; the people can not be prevented from believing on him; the only hope is in destroying him. And the pretence of danger to the State may serve to justify this step. And, says the high priest, kindling with indignation against some who hesitated, it is surely better that one man should die, than that the whole nation should perish; uttering unconsciously a momentous truth.

This speech decided the council; they declared that he must die; and henceforth eagerly sought some opportunity to put him out of the way, without exciting a public tumult.

To avoid their snares for a time, Jesus retired to Ephraim, an obscure village, occupying an elevated position, about twenty miles north-east from Jerusalem. Hated and hunted like a panting fugitive, he climbs the rugged heights of modern Taiyibeh.

[Matt. 19: 1, 2; Mark 10: 1; Luke 13: 10—21.]

From Ephraim Jesus made short excursions down into the valley of the Jordan, continuing his labors in that promising region. As an illustration of his labors and success here, it is related that one sabbath while teaching in a synagogue he discovered in the congregation a woman who was "bowed together" by a chronic infirmity of eighteen years' standing. Calling her to him he laid his hands upon her, saying, "woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And immediately she was made straight."

The ruler of the synagogue not daring directly to attack Christ, immediately rebuked the people for coming to be healed on the sabbath. Jesus regarding the rebuke as meant for himself, and desiring also to expose the bigotry of the ruler, asked him whether he does not on the sabbath "loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman" much more to be loosed from her bond upon that day?

These questions confounded the ruler and those who sympathised with him. They could not conceal their shame from the people; who could not, either, restrain their joy and admiration of Christ's works. The ruler's rebuke became the means of strengthening their confidence in Christ.

Contemplating the progress of his work and the happy results attending even such slight incidents as the above, Christ likened the "kingdom of God" to

the grain of mustard seed, growing to a great tree; and again to the hidden leaven working silently, imperceptibly, yet rapidly through the whole mass.

[Luke 13: 22—33.]

The time of the passover was now approaching, and Jesus turned again towards Jerusalem, travelling slowly and preaching in the cities and villages by the way.

The people who gathered about him were exhorted earnestly to use the present time and prepare themselves for admission into the true kingdom of God. To the idle question of one, whether few or many should be saved, he replied by bidding him strive only to secure his own salvation; and proceeded to state, that many deluded persons shall be excluded from his kingdom because they trust in some outward connection with his people and church, but have not that vital union to him which is secured by coming through the "straight gate" of repentance and self-denial. Foreigners from every clime shall be admitted to the social intercourse of redeemed patriarchs in heaven, while many who deem themselves peculiarly the people of God shall be excluded.

Jesus was now within the jurisdiction of Herod. Some of the Pharisees, perhaps sent by Herod, but more probably desiring themselves to drive Jesus out of Perea, came to him and told him to leave the country, or Herod would kill him. Nowise alarmed by

their warning, he bade them tell the crafty tetrarch that he should leave when his work was done. For a day or two longer I shall continue in his domain, pursuing my appropriate labors. I have no fear of Herod. Jerusalem is the place where prophets perish: when my work is perfected I shall go there to die.

Here follow many incidents and discourses which may not all have occurred precisely at this period, and in the order in which they are presented.

[Luke 14: 1—24.]

During the latter portion of his ministry, Christ seems to have sought rather than shunned occasions to come athwart the Pharisees and rebuke their formalism and selfishness. They certainly sought occasions to draw him into snares. It was probably designedly on their part, that, on a certain sabbath, when Christ had been invited by a Pharisee to dine at his house in company with a number of lawyers and Pharisees, a dropsical man appeared desiring a cure. Anticipating the opposition of the company, Jesus began by asking them whether it is "lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" Frustrated by this direct appeal, they are silent; and he heals the man, sends him away, and then completely seals their mouths by asking, as on a former occasion, which of them would not pull out his ox or ass if it should fall into a pit on the sabbath day?

This dinner gave occasion for several useful lessons to the Pharisees.

As they sat down to table, their vanity and pride was exhibited in their anxiety to occupy seats of honor, according to their notions of rank. This drew forth from Christ a beautiful rule of prudence for the regulation of social life on principles of humility and true politeness. Assume not the highest seat, is his advice, lest you be humbled; take rather the lowest, and stand your chance of promotion. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The humility enjoined by Christ pertains to our spiritual as well as our social life.

Changing slightly the topic, Christ next gave the host a rule to regulate him in the invitation of guests when making a feast. The direction was equivalent to a rebuke of that selfishness and exclusiveness prevalent amongst the Pharisees. Invite, said he, the poor and afflicted. Seek no recompense from men for your hospitality, but await the future recompense of the just.

Hereupon one of the guests remarked to Jesus, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." This remark was elicited by the allusion of Jesus to the "resurrection of the just," as the time of recompense to the faithful. The Jews expected such a resurrection when the Messiah should set up his kingdom. The Pharisees deemed themselves sure

of a place in that kingdom. Still intent to correct their false views, Jesus answered the speaker in a parable, designed to show that many of those who expected a place in his kingdom should be rejected, while those whom they despised should be admitted. Continuing to use the figure of a feast, he told them of the first invited guests, who, on account of worldliness and a failure to appreciate the invitation, treated it with indifference, and were rejected; and of the "poor, maimed, halt, and blind," the publicans and sinners and foreigners, who were afterwards welcomed, and shared the feast.

[Luke 14: 25—35.]

Soon after the above we find a great multitude following Christ, to whom he sets forth the necessary conditions of true discipleship. He aims to correct their false expectation that the Messiah would erect a splendid, earthly court and kingdom, assuring them that instead of expecting ease and honor in his service, they must be prepared to make all conceivable self-denials; even kindred and life itself must be held second to him. Let the disciple count the cost before he enters Christ's service; let him be ready to take up his cross and follow his Lord to the field of execution. Without such devotion he will fail, and reap only the shame of apostacy. And what is more vile than the apostate? Like salt that has lost its savor, he is fit only to be cast away.

[Luke 15: 1—32.]

Christ's sympathy for the destitute and despised, as well as their own conscious need of his salvation, attracted to him increasing numbers of "publicans and sinners." His kind reception of them, however, increased the disaffection and contempt of the higher classes. This called forth the beautiful parables of the lost sheep, the piece of money, and the Prodigal Son. Each of these parables exemplifies the same truth, the affection of God for his wayward, wandering children. Our estimation of the value of a soul is enhanced by his picture of the joy experienced in the world above when one sinner is reclaimed.

The moving story of the Prodigal beautifully illustrates the character and experience of the self-righteous legalist, the elder son, the Pharisee; of the worldling who runs through the whole round of earthly enjoyment, becomes conscious of its insufficiency, and in his wretched beggary returns penitent to God for pardon and a better portion; and the strong, paternal love of God, yearning to receive back the vilest sinner. Salvation is not limited to favorites. The Great Father would run to embrace any returning prodigal, though he had been never so vile a sinner.

[Luke 16: 1—13.

There were probably, amongst the publicans who came to hear Christ, many who had accumulated property by unrighteous means, and many others of

covetous disposition. The parable of the unjust steward teaches us that in the service of God we might profitably learn from such worldlings the importance of prudence and adherence to a single purpose; and the proper use of wealth in order to purchase by it heavenly treasures. The steward makes everything tell for his selfish purposes, uses his opportunities so as to secure a home when his present position fails him. So should the good man, by a righteous but judicious policy, and singleness of aim, make even his unrighteous mammon, his wealth, contribute to his future welfare. For this end let him expend it upon the destitute children of God, who will in turn welcome him to their home above. Mammon must not be worshipped or sought as an end. God will not dwell in the same heart with that grovelling demon; but mammon may be harnessed to the car and made to speed salvation.

[Luke 16: 14, 15, 19—31.]

Some covetous Pharisees, who heard the parable of the steward, and the exhortation following it, derided the Savior; whereupon he reproved their self-justifications, and proceeded to deliver the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, contrasting those who seek their chief enjoyment in this world, its riches and pleasures, with those who seek the true riches, and receive their "good things" hereafter. The selfish, uncharitable, luxurious worldling shall, when sense

and earth fail him, suffer an eternal hunger and thirst and torment; while the pious, submissive sufferer on earth shall find his soul's desires satisfied in heaven.

The parable also inculcates the truth that no miraculous exhibitions, not even the return of a soul from the other world, would avail to bring a carnal, worldly mind to repentance and faith, if he is unmoved by "Moses and the prophets."

[Luke 18: 9—14; Luke 18: 1—8.]

Nor will God receive a soul that does not come in repentance and humility to him. This truth, beautifully illustrated in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, who went up to the temple to pray, also comes athwart the self-righteousness of the Pharisees, for whom it was spoken. The Pharisee, exalting himself above the despised sinner, trusting in his self-acquired merits, is condemned; while the notorious sinner who confesses and feels his unworthiness receives pardon and justification. The difference in their prevailing spirit and self-estimation is exhibited in the prayers.

The hearer of prayer scrutinizes the heart. He is a God of justice, and not a respecter of persons; hence the penitent suppliant need never despair of an answer. The righteous God will hear his children, though sometimes he may try their faith by delaying the blessing. But if an unjust judge would avenge a widow for whose interests he had no regard, merely

to be free from her continual entreaties, much more will "God avenge his own elect which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them." The difficulty is that mankind have not confidence enough in God's righteousness. This want of faith, and not God's indifference or injustice, prevents the answer to prayer.

[Matt. 19: 3—12; Mark 10: 2—12.]

The remarkable trait in all these discourses is the accuracy and insight with which Christ at once penetrates to the heart of the matter in hand, and sets forth the fundamental principles by which it should be tested. This original insight, and clear apprehension of fundamental principles, is aptly illustrated in his remarks upon marriage and divorce.

The question was much debated by the Jews, whether divorce was morally right in all cases at the will of the husband, according to the civil or theocratic law of Moses. When the question was proposed to Christ for his opinion, he at once separated the civil from the moral aspect of marriage, and referred the questioners back to the original institution. God said, "they twain shall be one flesh." The original idea of marriage was that of an inseparable union, unitizing, of the parties. And Christ aims to restore society to its original condition.

But why, it is asked, did Moses provide for divorce? The answer is, that Moses conceded somewhat

to the spirit and customs of the age. He promulgated what might serve as a civil code; and of course could not hope at once to realize the moral idea of society in the state. But the original design of marriage prohibits divorce, except for the one crime of conjugal infidelity. Christianity does the same.

This view of marriage, so far in advance of the sentiment of the age, elicited from the disciples the suggestion, that celibacy would be preferable to marriage under such restrictions.

To this suggestion, he replied, that some may for the sake of greater efficiency in the service of God control their natural inclinations and abstain from marriage. Others are disqualified for the relationship; but all, says he, can not adopt this doctrine. Celibacy can not become the general rule.

The impression is given that God ordained marriage as the common law; but under peculiar circumstances, particularly when the gospel is to be disseminated by itinerant evangelists, it may be *expedient* to remain unmarried. So also those who, like Paul, are subject constantly to persecution, and liable to be at any time imprisoned or put to death, may with propriety remain single. No intimation is given that celibacy is more holy or desirable than matrimony.

[Matt. 19: 13—15; Mark 10: 13—16; Luke 18: 15—17.]

A variety of incidents occurred in Perea, which served to draw out the sentiments of Christ upon

different topics. On one occasion the people manifested their high regard for him by bringing to him their little children that he might invoke a blessing upon them. The disciples remonstrated against this transaction regarding it as an imposition upon their master. Jesus, however, used the occasion to set forth by vivid illustration the disposition of heart necessary for admittance into his kingdom. Affectionately taking the children up into his arms, he "put his hands on them and blessed them," telling his disciples that only they who possess a child-like spirit can "enter the kingdom of God."

[Matt. 19: 16—30; Matt. 20: 1—16; Mark 10: 17—31; Luke 18: 18—30.]

This incident took place just as Christ was leaving a certain town. After he had gone out of the town he was overtaken by a rich, young ruler, who kneeled and asked what he must do "to inherit eternal life?"

Urbane and amiable, with a blameless exterior deportment, the young man probably expected commendation from Christ, or at most the direction to practice some new rite. Addressing Jesus as "Good Master," he received at once a reply adapted to check his self-esteem. "Why callest thou me good?" says Christ; "there is none good but one, that is God." In the highest sense, God alone is good; and the ruler did not address Christ as God, supposing him to be only a great man. He would have called

a Jewish Rabbi good, in the same style; he would gladly be himself addressed in the same manner. As a lesson to him Christ disclaims the appellation. He then gives the young man opportunity plainly to assert his own self-righteousness: "all these have I kept," says he, referring to the commandments proposed by Christ as the condition of salvation. The latter saw that there was a selfish worldliness in the young man's heart, and that one important element of piety was wanting. He therefore bade him distribute his wealth to the poor, and follow him as a disciple. This exposed the defect of his character; he could not wholly renounce the world. And as he "went away sorrowful," Jesus called the attention of his disciples to the difficulty of entering heaven while encumbered by the riches of earth. Sooner "may a camel go through a needle's eye," as runs the proverb, than a rich man enter heaven. This implies, as the disciples saw, a natural impossibility; but "with God all things are possible." God only can impart that higher love which weans the heart from earth and attaches it to the true riches.

Peter hereupon enquires, what shall be their portion who have renounced the world to become disciples of Christ? The answer is that every one who has renounced his worldly interests and attachments for the sake of Christ and the gospel "shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." Their sacrifices shall be

amply repaid in spiritual enjoyments and new relationships, and treasures of a higher kind even on earth; but the main reward is the "life everlasting" above earth and time. But many who, like the young man, esteem themselves as first, surest of heaven, "shall be last," perhaps fail entirely; while humble Gentiles shall be welcomed as "first."

The enquiry of Peter, what they should have? may have suggested the parable of the laborers in the vineyard, designed to check the passion for rewards.

They who were called at the eleventh hour receive as much as they who were called "early in the morning." And this with no injustice, for all the recompense is a gift of grace; and he who bestows gifts should not be complained of, however he may proportion his favors. God beneficently chooses to proportion our wages, not to the length of time we serve him, but to our faithfulness after we have been called. All who are converted become partakers of the same heaven. And no one can with propriety claim more than God gives him.

[Matt. 20: 17—19; Mark 10: 32—34; Luke 18: 31—34.]

Thus Jesus labored along the Jordan until the first of April, when he again directed his steps towards Jerusalem. Considering the hostility of the Sanhedrim, the disciples were astonished and terrified at the determination of Christ to return thither so soon. Calm and resolute he marched before his timid and

reluctant followers. Nor was their fear diminished when he told them, "the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes: and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him." These prophetic words fell like a pall of mystery and terror upon the anxious disciples. That Messiah should yield to his enemies seemed almost inconceivable; yet everything indicated it: Jesus himself predicted it. True, he also said that "the third day he shall rise again;" but this was a part of the insoluble enigma. Time only could explain to them these dark utterances. Still they had faith in their leader, and followed on towards Jerusalem.

[Matt. 20: 20—28; Mark 10: 35—45.]

Amongst the followers of Christ at this period was Salome, mother of James and John. These disciples, still cherishing the expectation that Christ would erect a temporal throne and kingdom, and convinced that the great crisis in his mission was near, yielded to their carnal ambition so far as to prefer, through their mother, a request for stations of honor in the new theocracy. Christ replies that they know not what they ask, and enquires whether they are able to share the labors and sufferings which are before him. They reply inconsiderately that they "are able." Jesus then kindly teaches them that although they

may drink of the same cup with him, he can not arbitrarily, from mere personal regard, grant them rank and station in his kingdom. That depends upon character, and is an allotment of the righteous Father.

The other disciples are indignant at James and John for this selfish vanity; but Christ employs the occasion to give them all a lesson upon humility. There shall be among you, says he, no ranks and distinctions of lord and servant, such as the world makes; but he who excels in humility, and in offices of kindness to his brethren, shall be accounted greatest amongst you. As the Son of Man came to serve the race and to "give his life a ransom for many," so let it be your ambition to serve each other; this is Christian ambition.

[Matt. 20: 29—34; Mark 10: 46—52; Luke 18: 35—43; Luke 19: 1.]

Somewhere near Jericho, about eight miles west of the Jordan, Jesus probably joined the caravan from Galilee, which took this route in going to Jerusalem to attend the passover. At least we find him in company with "a great multitude," going to the passover.

Near the city gate sat two blind men, one of them a son of Timæus, probably a man of note. Hearing that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, one or both of them began to cry out, "O Lord, Son of David,

have mercy on us!" The multitude rebuked them for this interruption, regarding it as an incivility. But Bartimeus, strong in faith and earnest for relief, cries the louder, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus hearing the cry, bids them bring the blind men near, commends their faith, touches their eyes, and they see.

[Luke 19: 2—27.]

In the procession that accompanied Jesus, as he left the city, was a rich publican who was very anxious to get a sight of him. But he was too short to overlook the crowd that surrounded the Saviour, and unable, so great was the pressure, to approach him. Running before the caravan, he climbed up into a sycamore tree that grew by the road-side. Christ perceived him, and, perhaps aware that he was favorably disposed towards the truth, called him down and proposed to spend the day with him as his guest. This unexpected attention from Christ deeply affected and won the heart of the publican. He listened attentively to the discourse of his guest, and soon declared himself penitent, and resolved to make restitution for his unjust exactions, and to lead a new life.

Some of the company, who saw Christ leave the caravan to go and spend the day with Zaccheus, murmered "that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." Jesus replied to this complaint that he

was "come to seek and to save that which was lost," and that this publican was "a son of Abraham," to whose house salvation had come.

The theme which now most occupies the minds of the disciples is the advent of the new theocracy. They are within a day's march of Jerusalem. Christ is going in the face of a decree for his death. The strength of the nation will be assembled to observe the passover. A large proportion of the people are enthusiastic in their admiration of Jesus; and he himself intimates that the final catastrophe and climax of his work is at hand.

With their worldly view of Christ's plans, and expectation of a political revolution, they can not doubt that "the kingdom" is near.

To correct their impressions and intimate the long process yet to be gone through, Christ utters the parable of the nobleman who went to the seat of a great empire to receive a crown, as king over his countrymen.

At his departure the nobleman committed an equal sum of money to each of his servants, as capital upon which they were to work. After his departure, his countrymen sent an ambassador to the same court to prevent his coronation, declaring that they "will not have this man to reign" over them.

He was, however, successful; returned with regal authority, called his servants to account, assigned them stations of trust and honor proportioned to

the improvement made upon the loan, utterly discarding the indolent servant who buried his capital; and gave an order for the immediate execution of his enemies.

The evident import of the parable is, that Christ is not yet ready to erect his throne, that he is first to leave the world, be opposed by his enemies, leave his servants to labor in his behalf, and at length return to judge his enemies, reward his faithful servants, and henceforth reign in righteousness.

Peculiar emphasis is laid upon the activity of the disciples. Their place in the kingdom will depend upon what they do in their Master's absence. They may not retire into obscurity, bury their talents, be harmless cyphers in the church; they must work. He who does not well employ what God has given him shall lose even what he has; but he who faithfully uses his gifts shall receive a still higher trust.

[John 11: 55—57; 12: 1, 9—11; Luke 19: 28.]

It was now the beginning of passover-week, and already many had assembled at Jerusalem to "purify themselves" before the feast. On all hands were earnest enquiries and conjectures concerning Jesus. "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?" was a common question. Those who hoped to see him doubted whether he would brave the Sanhedrim, who

had published an edict that if any one knew where Jesus was, he should inform them, in order that they might arrest him.

Whether Christ spent the Jewish sabbath, Saturday, in Jericho and came to Bethany on Sunday, or came to the latter place on Friday, can not be determined. At any rate, he was there the sixth day before the passover. As usual, he stopped at the house of Lazarus and the sisters. This house was much frequented at the time by persons from the city who came to see Lazarus, who had been raised from death; and the numbers greatly increased when it was known that Jesus was there. The testimony furnished by Lazarus in favor of Christ wrought so effectively that the Sanhedrim began to plot also against his life. Their prowling minions were on the alert; wily stratagems were laid. "Hell from beneath was moved" against the "Lamb of God." He, calm and meek, comes forward a willing victim. In the rocks and caves of Ephraim, or in the cities of Galilee, he might have still found peace and shelter. But the labors of his toilsome mission were hastening to an end; he had yet to seal his testament with blood; and by a free self-sacrifice consummate his atonement. His time had come. Henceforth the persecuted will flee no more. Knowing "the things that shall befall" him at Jerusalem, he comes with a bold heart to suffer the worst. His great purposes are fast ripening. Who can tell what thoughts throng

upon his mind, this Sunday evening, as he lies down to rest in the house of his friends at Bethany? One day of the last, eventful week has passed. The remaining days are big with interest.

# PERIOD VII.

## FROM THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY TO THE CRUCIFIXION.

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[Matt 21 : 1—11 ; 14—17 ; Mark 11 : 1—11 ; Luke 19 : 29—44 ; John 12 : 12—19.]

MONDAY witnessed a strange scene in Jerusalem ; a scene novel and exciting to spectators, repugnant to the habits and feelings heretofore exhibited by Christ, and astounding to his enemies.

In the morning Bethany was filled by visitors from the city. Multitudes from different parts of the land, who had heard of Jesus and his miracles, many who had before seen him and believed, hearing that he was at Bethany, came out to see him.

In the course of the day he proposed to go himself into the city. The enthusiastic multitude, many of whom were eager to hear him publicly proclaimed king, were ready to accompany him as his retinue. Perhaps the better to avoid the pressure of the crowd, and to heighten the effect of the singular demonstra-

tion which he was about to make, in accordance with the prediction of Zechariah, he mounted an unbroken ass-colt, rudely equipped with the garments of some disciples, and started for the city. News was there received of his approach, and crowd after crowd rushed forth to meet him. Meeting him, they joined the procession, strewing the road with their garments and palm-branches, after the manner of welcoming a royal personage. It seemed as if inspiration had seized the assemblage.

As they began the descent of the Mount of Olives, the joy and enthusiasm of the disciples became irrepressible, and they began to shout and sing, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The multitude caught their fire and joined the strain, crying "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest!"

Some Pharisees who had joined the march, looked on indignant, bitterly saying to each other, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold the world is gone after him." Then approaching Jesus, with a show of zeal for order and propriety, they asked him to rebuke and silence his disciples. Silence them! "if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out," is his reply. This demonstration has a significance; Pharisees can not stop it. Alas, for Jerusalem, that her rulers regard it so bitterly.

As they wind down the mountain-side which overlooks the city, Jesus forgets the adulation of his train,

and is lost in the contemplation of that doomed city that seeks the death of her lord. Tears start down his cheeks, and, as if unconscious of the presence of the multitude, he breaks out in pathetic lamentation for the city, predicting minutely the ruin which a few years later came upon her.

Soon Kidron is crossed, and the city gate entered. Anon the whole city is moved and agitated, starting up as from a sleep of ages. What and "who is this?" is the oft-repeated question. To which it is answered, "this is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus, as usual, immediately seeks the temple, and is followed by the admiring people. Here are collected "the blind and the lame," whom he heals. Each miracle increases the ardor of the spectators; and even the children gather around him, crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" As he remarks to the complaining priests, praise is perfected "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings."

Here, in a worldly sense, is the culmination of Christ's mission. Virtually he is by acclamation proclaimed king of the theocracy. Despite the ban of the Sanhedrim, he is by the assembled nation heralded into the royal city as "Son of David."

Christ himself doubtless attached great importance to the above event as a confirmation of prophecy, and a public declaration of his Messiahship. The manner of his approach also symbolised his humility

and the peaceful character of his reign. But he well knew that many of those who cried Hosanna would soon turn against him. He had no thought of reaping political advantage from this ovation. He would by no means engage the enthusiastic people against his enemies. Hence he sought the house of prayer, and at evening quietly retired again with his little band of disciples to Bethany. A few hours of this world's honor sufficed for him. As night came on, the city settled down in quiet; the crowd dispersed to seek lodgings; and the astonished, enraged Sanhedrim could again breathe more freely, and compose their bewildered wits for new machinations.

[Matt. 21: 12, 13, 18, 19; Mark 11: 12—19; Luke 19: 45—48.]

A miracle of peculiar character and impressive significance was performed on Tuesday morning, as Jesus with his disciples returned across Mount Olivet to the city. Seeing a fig tree covered with foliage near their path, and being hungry, they approach it, seeking fruit. But the idle tree bears nothing more than leaves. Regarding it as an apt type of the Jewish theocracy, Jesus resolved to make it also a symbol of its coming ruin. "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever," said he, and passed on; but those blighting words passed not. Next day the surprised disciples found the tree withered and "dried up from the roots."

Entering again the temple, Christ passed around

through its courts, rebuking and driving out the traders and money-changers, overturning their tables, and charging them no longer to make his Father's "house of prayer" "a den of thieves." So vivid was the impression of his prophetical character, and so pungent his appeals to the consciences of these selfish men, that they made no resistance. Even the malicious priests and scribes could only look on in impotent rage, for so great was the admiration of the mass of the people, and their enthusiasm in Christ's behalf, that the authorities dared not touch him. Their only hope now was in either secret violence, or some stratagem, by which to change the feelings of the capricious multitude, and secure, by false testimony, an indictment and a condemnation that might wear a show of justice in the eyes of the populace.

They are doubtless gratified to-day to see that he does not seem disposed to follow up the impression of yesterday, and hold the multitude excited by new demonstrations. They doubt not that the zeal of the people will soon abate if nothing decisive and revolutionary be done by their leader. Christ knows this, and designs it. Hence he shuns everything like a political manœuvre, confines himself to the temple as a religious teacher, or retires to solitary places for communion with his disciples.

The purification of the temple, which we have just noticed, seems to be a repetition of what he had done just after the commencement of his ministry, if in-

deed it be not a different account of the same transaction. It was an expressive symbol of his Messianic authority, and of that spiritual purification which he proposed to effect in the theocracy and the world. It also exhibits Christ's regard for existing, religious institutions. Radical as he was, herald of a new dispensation, teaching that forms and organisms were of no worth compared with a right spirit, he yet respected the institutions of his country, and exhibited the liveliest zeal, not for their demolition, but for their purification and prosperity.

[Luke 21 : 37, 38.]

Tuesday was spent in the temple teaching the attentive people who gathered around him. The night was passed somewhere on Olivet. Early on Wednesday morning the court of the temple was again thronged by an eager congregation. These were precious days, and the great Teacher made the most of them. It was his last opportunity to preach in person to the assembled nation; the interest in his discourses deepened from day to day. The sermons of Wednesday seem more like the labor of a year than of a day.

[Matt. 21 : 20—22 ; Mark 11 : 20—26 ; Luke 17 : 5, 6.]

On Wednesday morning as they were going to the city, Peter called the attention of Christ to the withered fig tree, surprised at the influence exerted upon it by his words.

This furnished occasion for Christ to remark upon the importance of faith in attempting anything difficult. Whatever you may attempt for the glory of God, believe that your words shall be fulfilled, and it shall be done; though it were the removing of this mountain, or this sycamore tree, to plant them in the sea. This is also the secret of prevailing prayer. "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

[Matt. 21: 23—32; Mark 11: 27—33; Luke 20: 1—8.]

When Jesus entered the temple on Wednesday morning, he was met by a deputation of "the chief priests, scribes, and elders," who were resolved upon having some clearer explanation and understanding relative to Christ's plans and credentials. "Tell us," said they arrogantly, "by what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?"

Perceiving that they only desired to ensnare him, yet nowise disconcerted by their arrogance, Jesus in turn asked them a question, which at once placed them in an unpleasant dilemma. "The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me," says he, with decision.

They dared not deny that John was a prophet, for this would alienate the people, who generally believed that he was; and if they should admit his prophetical calling, they would thus admit their own inconsistency in rejecting him. Hence they refused to an-

swer his question; and Christ took their evasion as a justification of himself in refusing to answer theirs. Thus he foiled them on the start, by a single question; and immediately began the labors of the day.

First, he related a parable to expose the unrighteousness of those who rejected himself and his herald, John. The scribes and priests themselves admitted that a man's conduct was more important than his pretensions and promises. The son who at first refused obedience, but afterward "repented and went," did the will of his father; not the one who made fair professions, but failed in the fulfilment. And so, said Christ, is it with you who reject the Baptist. He came in the "way of righteousness," with such appeals that even publicans and sinners believed, but ye in your self-righteousness believed him not. They who are regarded as most reckless and hopeless "go into the kingdom of God before you."

[Matt. 21: 33—46; Mark 12: 1—12; Luke 20: 9—19.]

This was followed by the parable of the wicked husbandmen, which strikingly illustrates the conduct of the Jews who rejected Christ and his forerunners, the prophets.

The husbandmen who hired the vineyard of an absent land-holder refuse to pay the rent, and murder the collectors one after another, until the owner sends his son. Hoping to secure the inheritance, they then kill him. "What shall, therefore, the lord of the

vineyard do?" says Christ to the scribes and priests. "He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others," is their prompt reply, not perceiving the drift of the parable. Jesus adds, "therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God (the theocracy) shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." The murder of the son, and the transfer of the vineyard to other hands, were prophetic intimations of his own approaching death, and of the rejection of the Jews on account of their wickedness. We see how clear both his own sufferings and the future history of the theocracy lay at this time in the mind of Christ. Him the Jewish hierarchy had already rejected; but the rejected stone was to be the corner-stone of God's kingdom, and "grind to powder" those upon whom it should fall.

This application of the parable inflamed anew their rage, but fear of the multitude, who for the most part "took him for a prophet," restrained them.

[Matt. 22: 1—14.]

Of similar import is the parable of the marriage feast. The first invited guests refuse to come, some treating the call with indifference, others cruelly entreating and murdering the king's servants who came to bid them.

The outraged sovereign thereupon sends out an army to destroy the murderers and burn their city.

And, to secure guests for the marriage, he sends his servants out anywhere and everywhere to bring in whomever they should find, "bad and good." Thus the Jews, first called of God, rejected the invitation sent by the prophets, and killed in some cases the messengers. As God makes the feast in honor of Christ, the Son is not in this case sent out. The burning of the city, and the collection of guests promiscuously, signify the predicted destruction of the theocracy, and the subsequent calling of all nations to the gospel-feast.

After the guests have been assembled, an examination takes place, and one is ejected for the want of a wedding garment. This intimates the sifting of the visible church, and the rejection of those who formally accept the calls of God without a right disposition and change of heart. "Many are called but few chosen." A wedding garment is offered to every one, but some neglect to put it on; such shall be "cast into outer darkness."

[Matt. 22 : 15—22; Mark 12 : 13—17; Luke 20 : 20—26.]

A new device was now introduced by Christ's enemies, by which they hoped to get a ground of prosecution against him.

The Pharisees and Herodians, a political party which represented the Roman interest in Judea, joined together and proposed, through cunning delegates, a question which they supposed would require such an

answer as to involve him in trouble. Pretending great respect for his judgment, and prefacing their address with compliments, they ask Jesus "whether it is lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?" Should he answer in the negative, the Herodians could accuse him of hostility to the government; should he answer in the affirmative, the Pharisees could represent him to the Jewish people as hostile to their liberty.

Discerning their craft, Christ reproves their hypocrisy, and asks them to show him a penny or denarius, a Roman coin bearing the image and name of Cæsar. "Whose image and superscription is this?" he asks. "Cæsar's," is the reply. Then give "to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's," is his significant and instructive decision. The currency implied their subjection and Cæsar's dominion. Christ would take no interest in subverting civil institutions. While the government existed, he would support it. Christianity regards the state of men's hearts, not their civil and external connections. The Christian sustains law and order wherever he is not called upon to compromise conscience. The injunction, to render God his dues, is peculiarly significant in this connection: give to Cæsar that which bears his image; give also to God that which bears his image, yourselves.

Confounded by his answer, the crest-fallen committee retire in silence.

[Matt. 22: 23—33; Mark 12: 18—27; Luke 20: 27—40.]

Some Sadducees, who witnessed the failure of the Pharisees and Herodians, next proposed one of their test questions, expecting to puzzle Jesus on the subject of the resurrection.

A certain woman, said they, had successively seven husbands, and died childless; whose wife shall she be in the resurrection?

Jesus put them to silence, by showing that their question entirely misapprehended the doctrine of a future life. The relations of the present life shall not be transferred to that. The children of the resurrection are as the angels; they "neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more, for they are the children of God." And, according to Moses, whom even the Sadducees revered, God is "not the God of the dead, but of the living." Not the God of mere transient mortals, but of those who have a spirit akin to his own. In Moses' day he declared himself to be the God of Abraham; not of a dead, annihilated Abraham, but of the glorified Abraham, who dwells in the upper kingdom.

Some of the scribes present, pleased with this refutation of the Sadducees, exclaimed, "Master, thou hast well spoken." The Sadducees ventured no further. Indeed it began to be evident that nothing was to be gained to the cause of his enemies by questioning him.

[Matt. 22 : 34—40 ; Mark 12 : 28—34.]

But a Pharisee of the better class who was present put a question for the sake of getting Christ's opinion upon a subject much discussed by the Pharisees, to wit, what is the most important commandment in the law? Christ in his comprehensive brevity replied, that the first and greatest commandment is, "to love God supremely," and the second is, to "love one's neighbor as himself."

This answer was approved by the Pharisee, who showed himself superior to the formalism of his order by declaring that such love to God and man is more efficacious "than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifice." Pleased with his candor and correct view of the true spirit of the law, Jesus commended the Pharisee as one who was near "the kingdom of heaven." Had he exercised the love which he approved in theory, he would have been indeed a child of God and heir of the kingdom.

[Matt. 22 : 41—46 ; Mark 12 : 35—37 ; Luke 20 : 41—44.]

Having silenced those who sought to entangle him by intricate questions, Christ next put a question to them, touching the divinity of Messiah. Their idea of Messiah was simply as "Son of David." Jesus asked them how, if Christ were only David's son, the Psalmist, by inspiration in Psalm 110, calls him Lord? David being commonly regarded as the author. The question does not deny the Davidic descent of Mes-

siah, but intimates also a higher genealogy which Christ's captious hearers could not explain.

[Mark 12: 38, 39; Luke 20: 45, 46; Matt. 23: 1—12.]

Having thus ended the controversy with his enemies, Jesus said to his disciples, "in the audience of all the people, beware of the scribes," who cherish and exhibit a vain, selfish ambition. As the expounders and executives of the law, sitting in Moses' seat, obey them; but shun their example. They bind heavy burdens upon others, but they touch them not with a finger of their own. Whatever good thing they do is done "to be seen of men." Their very garments are fashioned to attract admiration; they covet seats of honor, and sonorous titles. In these things imitate them not. Call no man master or father; and suffer not others to address you by such appellations. God is your common Father, Christ your Master; and your true exaltation is your humility.

[Matt. 23: 13—39; Mark 12: 40; Luke 20: 47.]

Speaking of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, Jesus kindles with a holy indignation and directs to them a most cutting address. Every sentence begins with a "woe." It is startling to hear such denunciations break from the lips of the meek and merciful Jesus; but from this and other passages of his discourses we may form an idea of him in the capacity of judge, as he will at length be revealed.

The leading characteristics of the Pharisees here inveighed against are, their selfishness, leading to extortion; their hypocrisy, exhibited in great zeal for the externals of religion, without the spirit; and their deception, folly, and stupidity manifested in the fabrication of absurd traditions, misinterpreting scripture, and misleading the people. His specifications give us a graphic delineation of their character and practices. They "tithe mint and fennel" and omit "judgment mercy, and faith". . . "strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel". . . wash the "outside of the cups and platter," while they put within it the fruits of their "extortion and excess". . . "build the tombs of the prophets," deprecating the persecutions of their fathers, while at the same time they cherish the same spirit, and are ready to "persecute, scourge, kill, and crucify" the prophets of the new dispensation. "Whited sepulchres" full of uncleanness, he exclaims, "generation of vipers," guilty of the blood of all the prophets, "how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

Bitter, prophetic words, wrung bitterly from gracious lips. Even while he denounces, his heart yearns over the self-destroyers, and he breaks out in one of the most moving strains of pathetic regret. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" It is now too late; you have already rejected

the only Saviour. "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate!" Ye shall see me no more until, in my final, triumphal advent, ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

With these mournful, prophetic words, gilded with one faint streak of hope, closed the public preaching of Jesus of Nazareth, in the Jewish temple. His remaining discourses were given more privately to his disciples and others who sought him in retirement.

[Mark 12: 41—44; Luke 21: 1—4.]

Occupied as his mind had been with the false pretences of piety exhibited by the Pharisees, it seemed to gladden the heart of Christ when he saw, just at the close of his discourse, "a certain poor widow" work her way up to the treasury of the temple, and with true devotion cast in her two mites, "all her living." Here was a sincere person. It was no sacrifice for the rich to "cast in of their abundance," but to cast in the very last mite, and do it unostentatiously, exhibited a moral principle far more precious than gold. Christ approved, and by his notice made the widow's act immortal in history.

[Matt. 24: 1, 2; Mark 13: 1, 2; Luke 21: 5, 6.]

As they left the temple, the disciples called the attention of Jesus to the magnificence of the temple buildings, the massive and costly stones and superb ornaments of the structure. Reverting to the dark,

prophetic subject of which he had just before spoken, he told them sadly that in the coming ruin this splendid structure should be demolished, and not one stone be left upon another. Such should be the result of the unbelief of the Jewish rulers, and the sins of the nation.

[John 12: 37—42.]

The Evangelist here indulges in a reflection upon the results of Christ's labors. "Though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him." As Isaiah had said, the light and truth communicated to them only hardened their hearts and blinded their eyes; they would not believe, and with their obstinate unwillingness could not be convinced even by a miracle-working Christ.

Still it is affirmed that even "among the chief rulers" many did really believe on Christ, but through fear of excommunication were restrained from confessing their belief. Their minds were forced to admit his supremacy, but they had not the heart to renounce the favor of the world for his sake.

[John 12: 20—22, 44—50, 23—36.]

Amongst those who were favorably disposed towards Christ, and desired a closer communion, were some foreigners who had come to attend the Jewish feast. As we have before seen, the better part of the pagan world were looking with peculiar interest to the

Monotheism of the Hebrews. Christ seemed to them to be more cosmopolitan than other Jews, and they were favorably impressed by all that they heard of him.

Some Greeks of this character, with a degree of diffidence, sought an interview with him, about the time now under review.

Fragments of Christ's remarks at this interview are recorded. He dwelt with emphasis upon the fact that he was the manifestation of God; and that he spoke the words of God; words which convey life-everlasting to the believer.

Regarding these Gentiles as pledges of the success of his gospel, and the churches that should be gathered in his name,—and also their desire to see him as an indication that his own personal labors were nearly ended,—he exclaimed, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified," glorified as the Saviour of the world. Through sufferings and death he shall pass to glory, as the wheat springs from the buried seed. And as he is to triumph by suffering, so must they who would serve him and be honored of God with eternal life hold their present life cheap, and follow their Master.

The thought of his approaching sacrifice now presses heavily upon him, and he adds, "Now is my soul troubled." The human element shrinks from the cross that stands before it; yet his firm purpose is not shaken: he will not say, "Father, save me from

this hour." No, "for this cause came I into the world;" to make this sacrifice. To this he had constantly looked forward as the consummation of his great enterprise, and he would not retreat. Collecting again his noble energies, he subdues and calms the troubled emotions, and says, in meek submission, "Father, glorify thy name!" The victim is ready for the crowning sacrifice.

In answer to this exclamation, and in approval of this triumph of the divine purpose over the human weakness, a voice from heaven replies, "I have both glorified it" (my name) in the life and works of the Son, "and will glorify it again" through his sufferings and death.

This voice all present heard; but to those who were not in sympathy with Christ it sounded like inarticulate thunder. He interpreted it as a communication given, not for his sake, but to establish their faith. The import of it, he said, was that "the prince of this world shall now be cast out." Being lifted up from the earth (intimating the manner of his death), "I will draw all men unto me." The Father's name will be glorified in the triumph effected by the death of the Son.

To some of the by-standers the death of Messiah seemed an absurdity, and they enquired who this "Son of Man" was that he said must be "lifted up." Not disposed to arouse their prejudice he answered indirectly, admonishing them to walk in the light

while it was with them, in order that they might be the children of the light.

[Matt. 24: 3—14; Mark 13: 3—13; Luke 21: 5—19.]

After the above, Christ accompanied only by the twelve, perhaps only by "Peter and James, John and Andrew," purposely avoiding all others, went over the valley and up the side of Olivet, and sat down on the height overlooking the temple and city.

As they look down from this elevation upon the magnificent, but doomed city, the remarks of Christ relative to the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple recur forcibly to the minds of the disciples, and they ask him more definitely concerning the time of these things, the signs that shall precede his coming to judge the iniquitous nation; and concerning "the end of the world."

These questions engage Christ in a protracted discourse upon these great subjects. He dwells particularly upon the events that are to precede the destruction of the theocracy, and the course that should be pursued by his disciples. At times he also seems to run forward and discourse of the final judgment and consummation of the affairs of this world, making no clear distinctions between the two events. Indeed, as he tells them, the precise time of his advent for judgment is unknown except to the Father. But many things are specified that must first occur; many signs that shall immediately precede the last things.

He begins by cautioning them against false Christs, of whom there shall be many.

Wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes shall precede the downfall of the theocracy; "fearful sights and great signs from heaven" shall also be seen: "these are the beginnings of sorrows," but "the end is not yet."

Great persecutions of Christians shall take place. The disciples shall be beaten in the synagogues, brought before civil authorities, betrayed by relatives and apostate professors of Christianity, of whom there shall be many, "hated of all nations," "delivered up to be afflicted" and killed.

False prophets shall deceive the people; amid abounding iniquity "the love of many shall wax cold;" "but he that shall endure unto the end," adhere firmly to Christ, despite deceivers and persecutors, "shall be saved." And notwithstanding the extreme persecutions and apostacy, "the gospel must be published among all nations" before the end of the theocracy shall come.

[Matt. 24: 15—42; Mark 13: 14—37; Luke 21: 20—36.]

Here follow the immediate precursors of the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and a lively, prophetic description of that terrible tragedy enacted forty years later by the Romans, under Titus and Adrian. The signal for the retreat of the elect shall be the planting of "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by

Daniel the prophet, in the holy place." Immediately after that shall come "tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world." Tribulation so great, that "except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened." At the same time shall arise many false Christs (as history declares was the fact), seeking to lead the people astray, to their ruin.

Even the powers of nature shall manifest a sympathy with the great movements of Providence. Sun, moon, and stars, figuratively if not literally, shall fail, "and the powers of the heavens be shaken." Then shall "the tribes of the earth mourn" when they behold "the sign of the Son of Man" coming in the clouds of heaven to gather out his elect and judge his enemies.

These shall be the signs by which it may be known that "the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." Surely as the bursting fig leaves betoken summer, shall these things betoken the ruin of the Hebrew nation. Heaven and earth shall pass away sooner than these predictions fail. And their accomplishment shall be before this generation pass away, though the precise time no man or angel, not even "the Son, but the Father only," knows.

The advent of the Son of Man shall be sudden. As the flood in the days of Noah came down suddenly and swept away the old world in the midst of their

mirth and banqueting and business; so, like the springing of a snare, shall that day of doom come upon those who do not watch and pray.

[Matt. 24: 43—51; 25: 1—30.]

Changing the figure, the Son of Man shall come like a thief in the night; no calculation can be made for his appearance; the only safety is in being al ways ready. Or if that figure seem harsh, he shall come as an absent master, who had bidden his servant watch constantly for his return. If the servant be found at his post, he shall be promoted; if he give himself to carnal enjoyments, he shall be "cut asunder," and have his portion where "shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Or, taking another figure, the advent of the kingdom shall be like the coming of a bridegroom at midnight. And the church may be likenened to ten virgins waiting for him; "five of whom were wise, and five foolish." The wise had oil provided to replenish their lamps or torches, when the signal of the bridegroom's approach was given, and were ready to go forth and meet him, and with him enter into the festal house. The foolish had made no adequate provision of oil, their lamps were gone out, and before they could replenish them, the marriage procession had gone in, "and the door was shut."

Or, again, the waiting church may be likened to the servants of one who had gone into a far country, and who at his departure gave to each of them

a sum of money proportioned to his ability as a financier.

With one exception the servants, during their master's absence, doubled the amount, and upon his return, received promotion.

The one, however, who had received least, being of course the one of smallest ability, buried his talent, and at his lord's return, presented him only what he had received years before.

His lord, indignant at his idleness, took from him what he had and gave it to the one who made the best use of his trust, and directed to cast the unprofitable servant "into outer darkness."

This parable closely resembles that of the servants who received each a pound to occupy for their master. But in this case the gifts vary according to the abilities of the receivers; and the truth illustrated is that a man's merit depends upon his faithfulness in his appropriate sphere, and not upon the greatness of his gifts.

It is noticeabe that the idler is the one of smallest ability and gifts, who should, therefore, be the more vigilant; but is, instead, timid and discouraged and does nothing.

Both of the above parables show the importance of prudence, fidelity, and constant readiness for the advent of the judge. The foolish virgins and the slothful servant are monuments of warning for the world.

[Luke 25: 31—46.]

The allusion in the latter part of the above discourse was evidently to Christ's final advent to judge the world. In the same strain he proceeds to delineate the characteristic features of the last judgment, and particularly the grounds on which the sentence of each person is to be determined. The judgment seems also to relate particularly to professed believers; and the distinction is between true believers and hypocrites.

The leading principle upon which the judgment is conducted is that no religion is acceptable which does not exhibit itself in works of love. Love is everything; and a true love will manifest itself in action. Christ and his members being virtually one, he regards deeds of kindness done for them and from love to them *as his*, as done for himself, and rewards the doer accordingly.

The drapery and filling out of the parable exhibit many pleasing and important, though subordinate, thoughts. We may name the heavenly attendants, the complete separation of the righteous and the wicked, the humility of the righteous, and the self-justification of the wicked, and, lastly, the eternal and unchangeable destinies allotted them.

Noteworthy also is the thought that the "kingdom" was prepared for the righteous "from the foundation of the world."

[Matt. 26 : 1—16; Mark 14 : 1—11; Luke 22 : 1—6.]

In such discourse passed the fourth day of this eventful week. As evening comes on, Jesus and his disciples descend the mountain eastward to Bethany. By the way he tells them, that within two days more he is to be "betrayed to be crucified."

Meantime the Sanhedrim and their party were busy. At a special meeting, held at the house of Caiaphas for this purpose, measures were discussed for putting Jesus out of the way, by secret process or assassination. But even this they feared to do during the feast, lest there should be a sedition raised by the people. Jesus during the day-time had been generally surrounded by a multitude, and his nights were spent out of the city, they knew not where. No satisfactory opportunity as yet offered for an attack. An agent was needed who might inform them of the place where, and time when, Jesus could be found in retirement. Such an agent soon appeared, to their great gratification, in the perfidious Judas.

Judas must ever be regarded as the ideal traitor; and it is difficult to analyze such an anomalous character. Yet he probably acted out one common phase of humanity. Many who think of him with horror might, under like circumstances, have done as he did. We may conceive of him as at first no less promising than the other disciples, though more self-willed, covetous, and passionate. The twelve were all more or less selfish and ambitious, and could never, to the end

of Christ's ministry, renounce the hope of sharing with him the administration of a worldly kingdom. But under Christ's instruction, the eleven gradually became more spiritual in their views and hopes, and a more pure and disinterested love took possession of them. With Judas it was otherwise. His business habits secured him the stewardship of Christ's family, and pampered his covetousness. The refusal of Christ to assume a crown, and place himself at the head of the political theocracy, probably disappointed and vexed him. Destitute of the spirit of his Master, he grew restless and reckless. He may have hoped, as men grown desperate in suspense often do, to bring things to a crisis and hasten the developments of providence. There are also indications that his treachery was enacted partly under the impulse of sudden anger, occasioned by a rebuke administered by Christ at the supper in Bethany.

One Simon of Bethany, who had probably been cured of leprosy by Jesus, made a supper in his honor, to which were invited Jesus and his disciples, and Lazarus who had been restored to life. While reclining at table, the devout and pensive Mary, sister of Lazarus, took occasion, in accordance with a custom of her age, to express her profound admiration of Christ, by pouring upon his head and feet a box of costly perfume. Judas, in accordance with his character, unable to appreciate Mary's feelings, and aware that Christ ordinarily disapproved of formal parade

and display, ventured to complain of the useless sacrifice. This spikenard "might have been sold for more than three hundred pence and given to the poor." Christ, however, approved the maiden's devotion, and rebuked the parsimonious spirit that would count so miserly the cost of reverence. Christ, pre-eminently the friend of the poor, does not disapprove of costly demonstrations in his honor at appropriate times. For Mary this was an appropriate time. "She is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying," says Christ; and "wheresoever this gospel shall be preached thoughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." It is her last opportunity to show her regard for her Lord; and her deed shall make her world-renowned.

Judas was rebuked and angry; as Luke says, "Satan entered into him." Soon after he went over to the city; bargained with the "chief priests" to deliver Jesus into their hands for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave; "and from that time sought opportunity to betray him." Such an opportunity he found upon the following night.

[Matt. 26: 17—19; Mark 14: 12—16; Luke 22: 7—13.]

Aware of the purpose of Judas and the Sanhedrim, Christ seems to have avoided the city on Thursday, and spent the day at Bethany. He would not surrender himself to his enemies until he

had finished his work. A few hours more he would spend in converse with his disciples. He had also a peculiar interest in the passover. That significant ordinance, the Paschal supper, was to be transformed and carried over into his new economy. He would not be restrained from its observance, nor interrupted by his enemies at that time.

Hence, on Thursday afternoon, he sent Peter and John to the city to prepare the supper, giving them such directions for finding the proper place as would secure secrecy, and prevent any but reliable friends from intruding.

Whether he had previously made arrangement with a friend for "a large upper room," or whether there was a supernatural prescience here exercised, is not said; the former seems more probable. Peter and John found things as he said: and at evening Jesus with the other disciples went over from Bethany, and found the supper prepared.*

*It is a mooted question whether Christ did not anticipate by one day the time of the Paschal supper. For a thorough discussion of this question, the reader is referred to Robinson's Harmony, or Bib. Sac. for August, 1845. Matthew, Mark, and Luke certainly imply that Christ celebrated the passover at the usual time. And the passages in John and elsewhere, which seem to contradict this view, are not decisive. They seem to be satisfactorily explained by Doctor R. Thus—John 13: 1; 18: 28—"Passover" may mean the festival in general, and not simply the Paschal supper. John 19: 14, "preparation of the passover," may be preparation *for* the *sabbath* of the passover-week, which came next day. The im-

[Matt 26: 20; Mark 14: 17; Luke. 22: 14—18; 24—30; John 13: 1—20.]

It is now the eve of the passover. The families of Jerusalem, with their numerous guests, are gathering around their several tables to commemorate the emancipation of their ancestors on that night when the destroying angel passed over their blood-sprinkled doors. In a certain "upper room" are gathered the family of Jesus; those twelve young, able men, with their wonderful leader, whom we have followed in their last three year's wanderings.

The care-worn Master looks around affectionately upon his little band as they seat themselves at the table, saying, "I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you, before I suffer." I shall celebrate this feast with you no more on earth. Taking the cup of red wine with which the supper commenced, he invokes a blessing, and bids them pass it around, telling them that he shall drink no more of the fruit of the vine "until the kingdom of God shall come."

This mention of the kingdom that should come before he would again eat and drink with them may have furnished the point of departure for the strange turn which the conversation of the disciples now took. They were still dreaming of the temporal kingdom, and soon fell into the old channel of their ambitious

propriety of capital executions on the feast-day may be accounted for by the excitement and rage of the Sanhedrim, and the fact that the Romans, who now ruled, disregarded Jewish customs.

hopes, and began to discuss the question, which of them should be greatest in that kingdom.

The affectionate leader listens in silence and sorrow, at first, but soon rises up from table, throws off his outer garment, girds himself with a towel, like a servant, takes a basin of water and begins to wash the feet of the company. Some of the astonished disciples make no remonstrance, not knowing what this strange movement can mean; but when he comes to the impetuous Peter, he breaks out in remonstrance, "Wilt thou wash my feet?" Jesus now tells them that the act has a significance which they shall hereafter understand. But Peter is decided, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Then, is the reply, "thou hast no part with me." His remonstrance, though springing from reverence for Christ, exhibited a spirit of insubordination, incompatible with that humility which Christ would inculcate. Catching, however, a glimpse of the symbolical import of the washing from Christ's last remark, he now cries out, "not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." But this, says the Master, would be needless; whoever has once been purified from sin needs only, like the person coming out of a bath, to be purified from casual, external, and involuntary impurities, that may as it were cling to his feet. "And ye are clean," have been thus purified; "but not all;" there was one present who had received no spiritual cleansing.

Having finished this lustration, and resumed his

garment, and again sat down to the table, he says to them, "know ye what I have done to you?" and proceeds to unfold the symbolical meaning of the transaction as a lesson on humility and a reproof for their vain ambition and contention for supremacy.

"The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship," "but he that is chief among you, let him serve." Ye call me Master, and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am." "But I am among you as he that serveth." And in this, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you," humbly perform acts of devotion and kindness to each other. As to the kingdom, you shall certainly receive such an one "as my Father hath appointed unto me." If you imitate my example, you shall "eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Howbeit, "I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen."

[Matt. 26: 21—25; Mark 14: 18—21; Luke 22: 21—23; John 13: 21—35.]

These last words were spoken mournfully. The thought that one of his little band was a traitor troubled his spirit. He had already alluded to it frequently, as if he would gladly awaken repentance in the breast of Judas, and save him from the ruin to which he was hastening. And now again after a pause, and a struggle of emotion, he says, "verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

This plain announcement, that one of their own number should be the traitor, startled the disciples, who now began to look with anxiety, suspicion, and self-distrust upon each other. Peter at length beckoned to John, who sat next to Jesus, to ask him who was the false one. John in a whisper asks the question, and is answered in a low tone, that it is he to whom Jesus will hand the piece of bread in his hand, after dipping it in the sauce, that was eaten with the Paschal supper. The uneasy Judas marks the whispering and the anxious glance of Peter and John as Jesus hands him the sop; and with the effrontery of a practised hypocrite asks, with whining tone, "Master, is it I?" With a calm decision, that went like thunder through the traitor's bosom, Jesus replies, "Thou hast said;" and "what thou doest, do quickly." A flash of rage burns on Judas' face to find himself thus discovered and exposed; he rises from the table, leaves the room, and seeks the Sanhedrim to consummate his perfidy.

Aware of his intent, Jesus remarks, after his departure, upon his own approaching demise: "The Son of Man goes, as it is written of him; but wo unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed." "Now is the Son of Man (to be) glorified, and God is glorified in him." The great crisis has come in which Father and Son shall mutually be glorified in each other. "Little children, yet a little while I am with you." Soon I shall go whither ye cannot now

follow. As my farewell legacy, I give you a new commandment, "that ye love one another," as I have loved you. This love shall be your badge of discipleship.

[John 13: 36—38; Matt. 26: 31—35; Mark 14: 27—31; Luke 22: 31—38.]

Peter would know why he cannot now follow his Master, declaring that he will lay down his life for Jesus' sake. The latter replies that they shall all forsake him this very night. As Zechariah predicted, the Shepherd will be smitten, and the flock scattered. But "after I am risen again, he adds, I will go before you into Galilee." Peter is, however, full of self-confidence: "though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. "Simon, Simon," says Jesus, sternly, "Satan has desired to . . . sift you as wheat." You shall be severely tried. "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." But, says Peter, I am ready for prison or death. Vain man! you lay down your life for my sake! Even "this night, before the second crowing of the cock, thou shalt deny me thrice." But the confident Peter and the others more vehemently assert their fidelity.

Christ next contrasts the time of their first mission in his service with the far different circumstances of their future mission. Then there was no hostility, and you went fearless, trusting to the people to supply

your wants. But hereafter you shall be amid enemies, in want and danger. Take money and sword for your future journey; expect no more favor from the world; for I am to be "reckoned among the transgressors," as it is written by Isaiah. Misapprehending his meaning, the disciples remark that there are "two swords" in the company; and Jesus here drops the subject.

[Matt. 26 : 26—29; Mark 14 : 22—25; Luke 22 : 19—20; 1 Cor. 11 : 23—25.]

It was Christ's design to leave his church some appropriate memorial of his sacrifice and his continued love. To institute such a memorial was one reason why he "desired to eat this passover" with his disciples. The traitor had now gone out, and the way was open for this institution. Taking some of the bread prepared for the passover, near the close of that meal, he blessed, broke, and distributed it to the disciples as an emblem of his body, soon to be broken for them. In the same manner he passed the last cup of wine, bidding them drink it as a symbol of his blood.

The injunction to do this continuously in remembrance of him shows that it was designed as a permanent ordinance. The bread and wine were appropriate emblems of that spiritual bread and water of life which he became to his followers. As his body was yet unbroken, the disciples could not regard the bread

and wine as anything more than symbols. They could not pervert his words into an assertion of transubstantiation.

[John 14: 1—31.]

After supper, Jesus sat long at table, entertaining his disciples with those rich discourses which sank so deeply into the susceptible mind of the beloved John. Leaning on his Master's bosom, and gazing intently upon his divine face, John received each word as wax receives the seal. And as in after life he recalled the events of that sad night, many a thought that had lain incomprehensible in his memory grew luminous and consoling.

At present the disciples were perplexed, sad, and fearful. To calm and comfort them, and show how he "loved them unto the end," Christ says, "Let not your hearts be troubled." I go, but it is to prepare a place for you, that you may be with me: have faith in me, as God. To the assertion of Thomas, that they knew not whither he goes, nor the way by which they may come to him, he replies, "I am the way; no man can come unto the Father but by me." To Philip's request that Jesus would show them the Father, he replies that he is virtually the Father; God is revealed in him. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I live in the Father, and the Father lives, speaks, and works in me. Asking favors of God in my name you shall receive. Lov-

ingly obeying my commandments you shall have the "Spirit of truth" as your comforter, until I shall again appear, and with my Father, spiritually and invisibly to the world, abide with the faithful. The Holy Comforter shall "teach you all things," and recall my words to your remembrance. Be not troubled or fearful. Despite the outward conflicts which await you, I leave you a benediction of peace; peace, not of the worldly kind, but peace of spirit, the peace of God. Reposing a loving confidence in me, you may even rejoice at my departure to my Father.

Henceforth I can talk but little with you. The "prince of this world" comes for his brief victory; and although he "has nothing in me," and I might escape his machinations, yet "that the world may know that I love the Father," I go to fulfil his command, by completing this self-sacrifice.

With these words, they leave the table.

[John 15: 1—27.]

After leaving the table, Christ continues his discourse in the same strain. The relation of the believer to Christ is vital and permanent. In God's husbandry Christ is a vine, and his disciples are branches. Every fruitless branch the husbandman cuts away; and every fruitful branch is pruned, that it may be more fruitful. Fruitfulness in the believer can only be secured by constant communion with Christ. He must grow out of his vine, and draw

thence his life-blood. By obedience to Christ's commands, an obedience springing from love, one may live in Christ, secure his love, and the fructifying communications of his spirit, and be filled with joy.

The substance of Christ's commandment is love, which must be manifested towards those who are his. Fulfilling this commandment of love, believers become friends of Christ (not servants), partakers of his inspired knowledge, chosen and ordained by him to bring forth fruit. Asking in Christ's name, they may receive from the Father whatsoever they desire.

But with this favor of God they must expect the enmity of the world. The disciple will not be better received than his Lord. Destitute of the true knowledge of God, the world persecutes the Son, and on his account will persecute his followers. Their hatred is groundless; they refuse the testimony offered by Christ to his divinity; and when Christ has gone, his disciples and the Comforter whom he will send shall still bear witness for him, and the hostile world will be without excuse.

[John 16: 1—33.]

Of these things, says Christ, I forewarn you, in order that you may not be disappointed and dismayed when they shall excommunicate you and seek your lives, thinking that they are thus doing God service.

Again he reverts to his departure, and the advent of the Comforter. The Spirit will be their helper in

all their trials; and in connection with their testimony will convince the world of their sin in rejecting Christ; of his righteousness to be exhibited in his resurrection and ascension; and of the judgment of the prince of this world, and of the final subjugation of all evil to the dominion of God.

This Spirit shall also perfect in them the knowledge of God which Christ has introduced. The whole counsel of God belongs to Christ, and of all that is Christ's the Comforter will inform his disciples.

He then adverts again to his absence from them for a little while, and they express their inability to comprehend what he means. Jesus then proceeds to develop more clearly the truth that, though they were to be deprived of his bodily presence, they should soon enjoy a spiritual communion with him, so rich and blissful, that their present sorrows would seem but the birth-pangs of an imperishable joy. After that they shall not need to come to him as they now do, but may, in his name, approach directly to God and ask blessings, with assurance of being heard. And in the communion which they shall then have with him, his words will no longer seem obscure, but plain and lucid.

They now comprehend something of his meaning respecting his departure to the Father, and declare their unqualified faith in him as the searcher of hearts, who came "forth from God." Jesus cautions

them against too great confidence in their faith; "for," says he, "the time cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered," and I shall be left alone; yet not entirely alone, — "the Father is with me!"

His concluding words beautifully express the aim and substance of his whole discourse: "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

[John 17: 1—26.]

Here follows a model prayer, embracing the same scope of thought contained in the above discourse. Aware that his work as teacher is now ended, he "lifts up his eyes to heaven," and fervently supplicates the Holy Father to glorify him, with himself, with the glory which they shared from eternity, and to bless his believing children whom he leaves in the world.

The work assigned him he declares to be finished. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." For them he prays, not that they may be removed from the world, but that they may still be kept in communion with God, as he had kept them while personally with them. As they are "not of the world," they will be hated by it; let them be preserved from its evil, and sanctified through the word of truth.

They are now sent forth as Christ's representa-

tives, and others will believe through their preaching; for them also he prays, that they all may be embraced in the same union with Christ and the Father.

Finally, he prays that those whom God has given him may be with him in glory, and participate in his eternal communion with God. The world has not known thee, O righteous Father; but "these have known that thou has sent me." And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

So he "loves his disciples unto the end," and prays for their final exaltation with himself, and the glorification of all who shall, to the end of time, believe the revelation he has introduced.

[Matt. 26: 30, 36—46; Mark 14: 26, 32—42; Luke 22: 39—46; John 18: 1.]

After this matchless prayer, the company joined in singing, as was customary after the Paschal supper. Full of sad and tender emotions they then descended from the "guest chamber," where they had feasted, and communed, and sorrowed. The disciples followed in silence their calm and heavenly-minded leader. As he had often done before, he conducted them out of the eastern gate of the city, across the Kedron, to the secluded garden at the foot of Olivet.

As Christ had prepared himself for his public ministry by meditation and prayer in the desert, so

now he retired to a lonely spot to prepare himself by prayer and meditation for the great and trying scene before him. Though maintaining a serene composure, and demeaning himself in view of approaching death, as the christian hero should, he yet felt deeply the shrinkings and shuddering common to his humanity and ours. The great crisis and burden of his mediatorial work cast its dark shadow over him. The sacrificial altar began to smoke. The conscious victim was yet free to retreat and escape the bitter cup. Conflicting emotions, the human against the divine, swelled and billowed within him. Night and enemies around him, tortures and death before him, the guilt of a world laid upon his shoulders, O what could the suffering Son of Man and Son of God do, but pray! On earth was none that could understand his sorrow and sympathize with him. The Father alone can comfort him.

Taking the three of his disciples who were most in sympathy with his spirit, and who had witnessed his transfiguration, he retires from the others to a more solitary part of the garden. Almost overcome by his emotion, he says to them, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me." Proceeding a few paces further, he falls prostrate, and in anguish of spirit cries aloud, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" Yet the project of redemption must not be renounced. If justice demands this sacrifice, "not my will, but thine be done!"

While he prays, grief and weariness overcome the disciples, and when he returns, he finds them asleep. Arousing them and bidding them watch against temptation, he again retires and prays as before, but, if possible, with greater earnestness and deeper agony. The burden of his prayer is the same as at first—"If this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done." A third time he wrestles in the same petition, but with such anguish, that the frail human tenement of the struggling soul almost gives way. Blood-drops gush through the pores; it is the climax of agony; and lest the strained heart-strings should snap asunder, an angel appears to comfort the tried one. Again the divine calmness returns; the human struggle ceases, and he cries again in triumph, "Thy will, Father, be done!"

Returning again to the sleeping disciples, who each time heard only the beginning of his prayer, whose spirit, as he kindly says, "is willing" to watch with the sorrowing Master, but whose "flesh is weak," he bids them now sleep on and take their rest.

[John 18: 2, 3.]

Leaving him there beside the sleepers, let us now look after the one disciple who alone in this hour of darkness is wakeful. Alas, that he should be awake for such nefarious purpose!

Leaving the "guest chamber" and his friends in anger, Judas immediately sought his employers and

informed them that his contract might now be fulfilled. At once there is a stir among the Sanhedrim and their minions. As soon as may be, a small band of Roman soldiers is procured to act as police in case of resistance. The menials of the Sanhedrim, and other Jews hostile to Jesus, hastily arm themselves with swords, clubs, or whatever can be laid hold of, while others furnish themselves with lanterns and torches. Thus provided, they sally forth banditti-like for their prey.

The design of Judas probably was to seize Jesus before he should leave the city; but finding the passover room deserted, he proceeds to lead his armed rabble towards Gethsemane, well known to him as a favorite resort of his Master.

Jesus, still watching beside the sleeping disciples, sees their approach as they come out of the city and over the Kedron towards Olivet. Well knowing what such a demonstration indicated, he awakens his disciples, telling them that the hour has come, "the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." "Rise, let us be going; lo! he that betrayeth me is at hand."

[Matt. 26: 47—56; Mark 14: 43—52; Luke 22: 47—53; John 18: 4—12.]

Starting up half bewildered, they follow Jesus to the garden gate, where, to their consternation, they meet Judas with his soldiers. As they go out of the gate, Judas who marched before the rabble soldiery, in accordance with a previous understanding, steps

forward, as if pleased to see his Master, and salutes him in the usual way. Jesus receives his salutation with the piercing question, "Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"

The soldiers now advance, and Jesus in his calm, majestic manner, meets them, enquiring, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth" is their answer. With the same composure he tells them, "I am he." Awed by his demeanor, and the thought that the great miracle-worker of whom they had heard so much confronted them, they shrink back as if stunned, and sink to the ground. Recovering and again advancing, he asks them a second time, "Whom seek ye?" and receives the same reply. "If, therefore, ye seek me, let these (my disciples) go their way." He would not that his friends should be injured for his sake. But the disciples, encouraged perhaps by the evident dismay of the soldiers, ask, "Lord, shall we smite?" Without waiting for an answer, Peter, in his headlong manner, makes a pass with his sword at the head of one of the company; and, failing of the man's head, cuts off "his right ear." Jesus, however, rebukes Peter, bids him put up his sword, with an intimation that it is not to be used in his cause, and remarks that, should he but ask it, his Father would now give him more than six thousand angels for each disciple as his defence. But he does not ask it; and still more to Peter's confusion, he touches and heals the wounded servant of the high priest. At the same

time he addresses his enemies in a manner that might well shame them." Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and stones for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me; but the scriptures must be fulfilled,—this is your hour and the power of darkness," intimating his surrender. Night and darkness suited their purpose, and the scriptures predicted this triumph for the power of evil. The soldiers thus encouraged advance, the disheartened disciples fly as for life, Jesus is seized and bound, and a young man, who probably lodged in the garden, hearing the tumult, and coming half dressed to the rescue, is attacked by the soldiers, and escapes with the loss of his girdle.

[Matt. 26: 57, 58, 69—75; Mark 14: 53, 54, 66—72; Luke 22: 54—62; John 18: 13—27.]

Alone with his enemies, Jesus is now conducted first to the house of Annas, who had been high priest the preceding year. Here he is detained until Caiaphas, the President of the Sanhedrim, can assemble the council and prepare for the trial.

Annas, meantime, carries on a kind of examination or preliminary trial, in order to beguile time, and if possible elicit some confession from Jesus that may be used against him before the council. Particularly he enquires of Christ respecting his disciples and his doctrine. Jesus answers him indifferently, telling him that his doctrines are well known, he had not taught

in secret. The multitudes who had heard him in synagogue and temple could tell what he preached. Ask them, not me, says he to Annas. Hereupon a menial of the priest strikes Jesus in the face for thus answering the dignitary. Jesus in reproof tells him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil;" prefer your charge in a legal way. But legality, reason, or decency, have no place amongst the enemies of the faultless Christ; there is no one to take the part of the guileless victim.

Even those disciples, who a few hours before vowed to stand by him in prison or death, have gone. Two of them indeed have "followed him afar off;" and even now they stand among the rabble around the the fire in the court of Annas' house; but they have nothing to say for their Master. Even the confident Peter trembles under the eye of a female servant. He hears Jesus questioned respecting his disciples, and terrified knows not but he may be next in the hands of the Sanhedrim. Thrice he declares himself ignorant of Jesus, and at last gives emphasis with oaths to his assertion. But while the oath of denial yet burns on his lips the cock is heard to crow; and Jesus, who had heard the perjury, casts a searching glance towards the false one; and that glance recalls the boast of fidelity and the warning at the passover; remorse rises bitter in the breast of Peter, till he retires and in penitence weeps away his sin.

[Matt. 26: 59—68; Mark 14: 55—65; Luke 22: 63—71.]

By daybreak the Sanhedrim are together ready for formal action. They had some days before decreed that Christ must die; but to secure his execution by the Romans, the forms of trial must be gone through, and some specific charge sustained by testimony. In the haste and confusion in which the council was convened (and haste was necessary to avoid an uproar of the people), witnesses had been collected and bribed to testify against Jesus; but their instructions were incomplete. To the mortification of the prosecutors, when called to testify, no two agree in their testimony. The nearest approximation to agreement is the testimony of two, relative to Christ's remark concerning the rebuilding of the temple; but even here there is discrepancy. In fine, the evidences of falsehood are so plain, that the hope of sustaining any charge in this way is abandoned.

Resort is then had to questioning the prisoner in open court, hoping thus to elicit grounds of condemnation. Jesus, however, scorns to plead his cause before this unrighteous council, and maintains a silent and dignified composure.

The wish of Caiaphas was to draw from Christ an assertion of his Messiahship. This would sustain before the council the accusation of blasphemy: or, if he should now deny his divine calling, they could condemn him as a deceiver and impostor. Finally, a new device occurs to the high priest, by which he can

secure an answer to his questions; it is to put Jesus under oath. Administering, therefore, the legal oath, he asks him, "Art thou the Christ?" "I am!" is the unfaltering reply of the majestic prisoner. "I am;" and you shall one day know it to your dismay. For "hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." We look to see the heartless council quail under such a response. But it "is the hour and the power of darkness." The fiend helps Caiaphas. Rising in a tremor of mingled rage and fear, which he disguises as holy indignation at such blasphemy, he rends his robe, and cries out to the assembly, "What further need have we of witnesses? Ye have heard his blasphemy." Putting at the same time the vote to condemn him to death, it is carried with acclamation.

Sentence of death being passed, the rude soldiers and baser fellows are permitted to insult and mock the holy prisoner. One spits in his face, another beats him with his fist, others bandage his eyes, and then striking him upon the mouth ask him to prophecy, "Who is he that struck thee?" "And many other things blasphemously spoke they against him."

[Matt. 27: 1, 2, 11—14; Mark 15: 1—5; Luke 23: 1—5; John 18: 28—38.]

But though they have condemned him to death, they dare not execute him. A sentence must be ob-

tained from the procurator, Pilate. The Romans hold the power of life and death. The next problem is to sustain a political accusation before the governor.

It was well known that Jesus had ever refused to interfere in anything of a civil or judicial character. Even when the people were ready to proclaim him king, as at the triumphal entry, he manifested no disposition to favor the project, but immediately left them. Still he claimed to be Messiah, the Anointed; to be in some sense a king. And their only hope with Pilate is to convince him that Jesus has some ambitious project hostile to the Roman rule.

As early, therefore, as a hearing can be had at the judgment-hall, they bring Jesus, bound, to the governor, and begin their accusation, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cesar, saying, that he himself is Christ, a king."

Pilate had no great desire to gratify the Jews; but his acts of injustice had been so many, that he feared an accusation might be preferred against him to Cesar, and therefore felt disposed at present to dally with them. Knowing that their hatred to Jesus was based upon religious prejudices, he tells them to take him and judge him according to their law; i. e., punish him as an ecclesiastical offender.

Their answer shows what alone will satisfy them. "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

Blood alone can satisfy them. Seeing their determination, Pilate next subjects the accused to a kind of examination. He has no fear that the meek, friendless man before him, opposed by the whole Jewish hierarchy, will interfere with Cesar's authority. But for form's sake, half in mockery, he begins, "Art thou the king of the Jews?"

After making Pilate confess that he asks the question merely in the manner of the Jews, Jesus tells him that he is a king; but "my kingdom is not of this world." I am king of the truth. Every one who listens to the truth is a subject of my dominion. The Roman has little regard for a kingdom that is "not of this world:" and as to truth, he regards it as stuff, about which sophists may dispute. He therefore closes the examination with the sneering question of the sceptic, "What is truth?"

The Jews, meantime, stand without the pretorium, in order to avoid any contagion in the house of a pagan that might unfit them for the festivities of the day. They would gladly dip their hands in Jesus' blood; but dread contact with a bit of leavened bread or swine's flesh!

Pilate now goes out to the Jews, and tells them that he finds no fault in the man.

But their accusations are renewed and multiplied. Charge after charge comes up. Jesus remains silent and indifferent. The governor, surprised at his seeming indifference, asks whether he has no reply to these

numerous accusations? Still he answers not; and again the Roman declares that he can find no ground of condemnation in him. But the accusers now wax fierce and furious, saying, "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."

[Luke 23: 6—12.]

Learning that Jesus is a Galilean, Pilate conceives that he may free himself from the difficulty by sending him to Herod, tetrarch of Galilee, who had come to Jerusalem to attend the passover.

Herod had long desired to see Jesus, hoping that he would perform a miracle before him. Jesus, however, never worked miracles to gratify an idle curiosity; and he pays no attention to the tetrarch's questions. "The chief priests and scribes" vehemently accuse him before Herod; but, as before, he answers nothing.

Herod, unable to secure any regard from Jesus, and regarding him as a fit subject for ridicule, at length with his men treats him with mockery and abuse. Arraying him in regal robes, he sends him back to Pilate.

The latter well knew from this burlesque that Herod found no fault in the man, and henceforth they two were friends.

[Luke 23: 13—25; Matt. 27: 15—26; Mark 15: 6—15; John 18: 39—40.]

By this time the Sanhedrim have collected all the enemies of Jesus, and all the rabble with whom they have influence, about Pilate's house, in order to make their demand appear to be the wish of the people.

The governor, not knowing what to do, proposes a compromise. He will admit the validity of their judgment, and call Christ a criminal, scourge him severely, and release him; as he was, according to custom, to release one prisoner on that day for the people.

But the multitude, instigated by the chief men, demand the release of one Barabbas, a robber, now awaiting execution. But what then shall I do with Jesus, whom I have examined and found innocent of the charges alleged against him? "Crucify him!" is the response. Pilate expostulates, "why, what evil hath he done?" But the only answer is, "crucify him, crucify him!"

Pilate's regard for justice was not the only thing that restrained him from compliance with their wishes. He was awe-struck by the calm demeanor of the accused; and, while on the judgment-seat, he received a message from his wife, warning him not to do anything against "that just man," concerning whom she had that night suffered much in a frightful dream. This touched the governor's superstition. But seeing that a tumult was likely to ensue, he released Barab-

bas; then taking water he washed his hands before them, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person." The multitude, now excited beyond reason, respond, "His blood be upon us, and on our children."

[Matt. 27: 26—30; Mark 15: 15—19; John 19: 1—16.]

Hoping to allay the rage of the mob by a partial concession, after releasing Barabbas, Pilate caused his soldiers to take Jesus into the common hall, scourge him, crown him with thorns, array him again in the mock-attire of a king, put a mock sceptre in his hands, and in derision bow the knew before him and worship. This satire is varied by beating him on the head and spitting upon him.

After the brutal soldiers have thus abused him to their satiety, Pilate leads him forth before the multitude, with his blood-reeking back and mock-attire, and setting him up before them attempts to excite their pity. Pointing to him as a poor, peaceful, harmless person, he says, "Behold the man." Has Cesar, or have you, anything to fear from one who wears a crown of thorns so meekly?

But instead of shaming them, or exciting sympathy, the sight of the injured sufferer only inflames their madness, and from the sea of heads roars back, long and loud, "crucify him, crucify him!" "Take ye him and crucify him:" then says Pilate, "for I find no fault in him." "By our law he ought to die,

because he made himself the Son of God," say they. This increased Pilate's superstitious fear. Going again into the judgment-hall, he says to Jesus, "Whence art thou?" The latter, knowing that Pilate had no affinity for the doctrine of his divinity, gives him no answer. This increases his wonder, and he proceeds, "Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" His fear and wonder are not diminished by the answer that follows,—"Thou couldest have no power against me, except it were given thee from above." The purpose of a higher Power works in this transaction. Once more Pilate intercedes for his release; but now comes a new response: "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cesar's friend." Pilate will do anything rather than be reported to Cesar. This appeal, therefore, prevails. Protesting against the deed as unjust, he brings forth the innocent sufferer, and resigns him a victim to their infuriate rage. Thus ends this impious mock-trial; thus fares the Holy One who seeks to save mankind. Christ is in the hands of enemies. With a horrid joy they who had planned his destruction see the base soldiers insult and beat their Lord.

[Matt. 27: 3—10; Acts 1: 18, 19.]

But there was one who bore a leading part in this darkest tragedy who could not rejoice. Having performed his part and received his silver, Judas mingled

with his employers and the mob to see the result. When he saw his faithful friend and teacher beaten and spit upon, his hard heart relented. As the trial proceeded, his silver began to burden him. Knowing the power of Jesus, he doubtless expected to see him confound his persecutors and escape. But as the diabolical work went on, his soul grew sick. And when at last he saw Jesus led forth, crowned with thorns, blood dripping from his scourged back, surrendered to the executioners with sentence of speedy death, remorse, deep and fierce, awoke and burned in the traitor's breast. Seeking his heartless employers, he exclaims, in bitterness of anguish, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood." But they have no sympathy for him; he has served their purpose, and now they bid him settle with his own conscience. Miserable comforters are companions in wickedness. Flinging down the reward of iniquity in the temple, the wretched man departs. He is seen next on the brink of a precipice below the city, fastening a halter about his own neck to end his miserable existence. As he swings off, the halter breaks, and, plunging headlong down the precipice, he is dashed to pieces upon the rocks.

Thus goes this wilful, selfish, though favored sinner, "to his own place." "The potter's field," bought with the "price of him that was valued," is still a memorial of Judas' treachery, and of the truth of prophecy.

From this sinner's frightful death, let us return and follow him who goes like a lamb to the slaughter, innocent, serene, and silent.

[Matt. 27: 31—34; Mark 15: 20—23; Luke 28: 26—33; John 19: 16, 17.]

After wearying themselves in mocking and abusing Jesus, the heartless persecutors clothed him again in his own garments, and started with him to the place of execution.

As was the common custom with criminals, they compelled him to carry his own cross. But his sleepless night, toils and sorrows, the agony in the garden, the abuse of the soldiery and the rabble Jews, the beating and scourging, together with the contemplation of the cruel, lingering death before him, have exhausted the strength of the sufferer; and by the way, as they proceed to the western gate, he faints and sinks under his burden. Simon of Cyrene, father of two men, afterwards eminent in the church, comes along just at this juncture, and is compelled to assist Jesus in carrying his cross the rest of the way to Golgotha.

As they pass onward, Jesus notices, in the long procession that follows, certain women weeping and lamenting for him. Faint, sorrowful, and staggering under accumulating sufferings as he is, the sight of these mourners calls forth from his great heart a burst of sympathy for the doomed city, that was filling up its measure of guilt in his murder.

Turning towards them he says, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." Alluding further to the woes that shall come upon the nation, and the days when they shall cry to the mountains, "Fall on us, and to the hills, cover us," he concludes with the question, "If these things are done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If such sufferings are executed upon me, the innocent, what shall befall those who are steeped in crime?

Arrived at the place of execution, a stupifying drink, as was customary in such cases, is offered to Christ and two other men who are to be crucified at the same time. Determined to suffer all in his full consciousness, he refuses the potion.

[Matt. 27: 35—38; Mark 15: 24—28; Luke 23: 33, 34, 38; John 19: 18—24.]

The process now is short and terrible. The cross is planted, the Saviour stripped and lifted up by the rude soldiers. It is but a moment, and the spikes are driven through his hands and feet; and there at last, with jeers and taunts, and horrid glee, his enemies see their victim hung upon the tree. Christ is crucified. On either side of him hangs a robber. "He was numbered with the transgressors." Over his head the passer-by may read, in large letters, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

And now the soldiers, with their hearts of flint,

may sit down and divide amongst them the Saviour's garments, and gamble for his coat, as the Psalmist of old predicted they would.

[Matt. 27: 39—44; Mark 15: 29—32; Luke 23: 35—37, 39—43.]

The rabble feed their greedy eyes with this saddest sight; and they that pass by revile. The chief priests, scribes, and elders, from the wall near by, cry to him in derision, "come down from the cross and we will believe on you!" You, Son of God and king of the Jews! save yourself now. You trusted in God, let him deliver you. Thus they jeer and deride the silent Jesus, who, in his distress, utters nothing save a *prayer* for *their forgiveness*. Even one of the thieves himself, in his tortures, joins the multitude and rails at his companion in death.

The other malefactor, of better spirit, ventures a word of justification for the innocent, and rebukes his railing comrade. This man had received a powerful impression from Jesus, and a deep intuition of his spirit, so that he recognised in him, even here, the Son of God. Conscious of his own wants, he prays as a true penitent, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Christ discerns in the man a true faith, and replies, in full confidence of his own divine power, "this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

[John 19: 25—27.]

His heart is compassionate still; and we are glad to learn that a few fond friends stood at the Saviour's cross. Noticing his bereaved mother, and the beloved John among them, with a true filial affection he commends her to the disciple's care.

[Matt. 27: 45—50; Mark 15: 33—37; Luke 23: 44—46; John 19: 28—30.]

Nature, however, seemed more in sympathy with her suffering Son than did the most of those about him. As his life began in miracle, so will it end. While he hangs there on the cross, his life slowly ebbing away, the sky is swathed in thick darkness; a darkness for which no astronomy can account.

As the ninth-hour of the day advances, the sufferings of Jesus reach their acme. For a moment the darkness seems to reach his soul, and he cries out in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Though the Father's face seemed hidden, he could still say, "*My God.*" He felt that feeling of desertion and loneliness which the Christian sometimes feels in hours of deepest trial. And who can say that it was not an infinitely deeper and more dreadful loneliness that oppressed him? The Father was still his Father; but the transgressions of a world were also at that hour upon him.

The blood now began to fail, and that burning fever came on which attends this form of death. They

who stand near, hear the faint lips murmer, "I thirst." A sponge, filled with the sour wine used by the soldiers, is reached to him. As if refreshed by the draught, summoning all his energies, he exclaims, with a loud voice, "It is finished!" Finished, the work of redemption. Finished, the sufferings of this evil time. The sufferer's head now sinks down upon his bosom, the fainting lips softly and sweetly utter, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit," and—Jesus is dead!

[Matt. 27 : 51—56 ; Mark 15 : 38—41 ; Luke 23 : 45, 47—49.]

The meek, loving, holy, magnanimous friend of sinners, there ebbed away his mortal life! Dumb nature can not stand that sight. As the death-rattle sounds from the cross, earth shudders ; quakes till the tombs fly open, and the very dead leap from their graves. The priest in the temple sees the veil, that hid the holy of holies, burst asunder. The centurion and soldiers who watched the crucified, and saw him die, and "saw the earthquake," feared greatly, saying, "Truly this was the Son of God." "And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned."

[John 19 : 31—37.]

To hasten the death of the malefactors, in order that they might be taken down before six o'clock, the

commencement of the Jewish sabbath, the soldiers break their legs. Coming to Jesus for the same purpose, they find him already dead. To prevent, however, the possibility of mistake, a wanton Roman thrusts his spear to the heart of the Saviour; and the last drops of his heart's blood, mingled with the water of the pericardium, flow from the wound.

[Matt. 27; 57—66; Mark 15: 42—47; Luke 23: 50—56; John 19: 38—42.]

The unrighteous execution of Christ was the occasion of drawing from one member of the Sanhedrim an open avowal of his attatchment to him. Joseph of Arimathea, like Nicodemus, and perhaps other members of the senate, had secret convictions of Christ's Messiahship, but feared to take a bold stand against the great majority of their council. Now, however, Joseph goes boldly forward, obtains from Pilate leave to bury the deceased, and he and Nicodemus decently dress and embalm the body, so far as time permits, and lay it in a "new tomb, hewn out in the rock;" thus frustrating the design of his enemies to bury him "with the wicked." Thus was he "with the rich in his death."

Some faithful and believing women, who watched in sorrow the dying Redeemer, and marked where he was buried, went immediately and "prepared spices and ointments" for a more thorough embalming of the body. But the hour of the sabbath coming on before

they had finished their preparations, they defer the process, intending to complete it after the sabbath, on Sunday morning. Jesus is in his grave; but the chief priests and Pharisees, his enemies, are not yet at ease.

"We remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again." To prevent the possibility of his removal from the tomb, and the consequent report of his resurrection that might be circulated, they obtain permission and means from Pilate to "make the sepulchre as sure as they can," until the third day. The heavy stone over the entrance of the tomb is sealed; and a band of soldiers, under strictest injunctions, set to guard the grave against egress or ingress.

So ends this darkest tragedy in human history. The few faithful mourn; the wicked rejoice; the toiling, sorrowing Son of Man rests from his labors. Nature, that paled and shuddered while Christ was dying, again grows calm. The sabbath sun shines softly down over the guilty city. A delirious world goes on in its giddy whirl, as if no Christ had died. Alas! Alas!

# PERIOD VIII.

## FROM THE RESURRECTION TO THE ASCENSION.

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When human heroes depart they come not back. But Christ was more than human. It was not without reason that his enemies "made sure the sepulchre." We know how frequently, when predicting his death, he added the promise that "after three days" he would rise again; that he had "power to lay down his life and to take it again." The stupified, desponding disciples needed some new pledge of his future communion and continued presence. The truth of his supremacy over death, and his life-giving power, needed an illustration. The doctrine of immortality through him needed the confirmation of a risen Lord; and, as was remarked in the introduction, it was to be anticipated that he whose birth was a miracle would not leave the world as a common personage, much less as a malefactor. His ministry as teacher, indeed, and as our atoning sacrifice, ended with his death. But these labors were precursors of a regal

triumph and an everlasting reign, and though his empire was that of truth, and his reign was to be invisible and spiritual, it was surely desirable that his disciples, who as yet but imperfectly understood his plan, should see him, as it were, in transition from humiliation to glory; and gradually rise, from communion with their visible Lord, to a purely spiritual intercourse.

For such, and kindred reasons, the resurrection of Christ might be anticipated. At the same time he should not be expected to rise from the dead to resume his personal ministry among the ungodly. He had introduced the gospel of reconciliation, and given to the unbelieving world sufficient proof of his divine commission, and if they would not believe him before, "neither would they be persuaded" if he should rise from the dead and preach unto them.

That Christ really died, neither friend nor foe could doubt. No man of that age pretended to doubt it. His enemies and executioners were the steadfast witnesses to this truth. Hence, in their efforts to refute the assertion of his resurrection, they contended that his disciples were either deceived themselves, or practised deception upon others.

But the circumstances of the case prevent the possibility of this. The disciples never understood the predictions he had made, nor expected his resurrection, till after it occurred. They were in despair when he died. They were moreover few and weak. The

strength of the nation was against them. Nothing but the actual re-appearance of Christ could have given them courage cheerfully to undertake the diffusion of Christianity. To *fabricate a rumor* of their Master's resurrection would have been far from their thoughts. Nor were they in any such expectation of his re-appearance as to be deceived by a vision or phantom. They were, on the other hand, so incredulous, that only personal interviews with the bodily Christ, social intercourse, seeing him eat and drink with them, could satisfy them that they were not deceived.

As to the possibility of resuscitating the body of Jesus by natural means, there certainly was no hope. The sorrows, and toils, and severe sufferings which preceded the crucifixion, his evident death some time before he was taken from the cross, the piercing by the soldier, and the burial, made the thought of resuscitation utterly hopeless, even if means could have been used immediately. Add to this that the tomb was sealed and guarded by hostile soldiers for two nights and a day, and that when Jesus appeared it was not as one restored from sickness or death by natural means,—not as a faint and feeble, almost bloodless, person,—but that he seemed at his first appearance strong and vigorous as if no spear had drained his heart; and the impossibility of restoration by natural agencies is evident and indisputable.

Finally, the body left the grave while the armed

guard (for whom to sleep at their post was death) kept watch. This no unbeliever or enemy disputed.

Thus stands this subject of the resurrection, apart from the testimony of credible witnesses, who lived lives of toil and suffering, and died the martyr's death, in confirmation of their story of a risen Lord.

We may now resume the narrative in its chronological order.

[Matt. 28 : 1—4 ; Mark 16 : 1—4 ; Luke 24 : 1—3 ; John 20 : 1, 2.]

Fast by the sealed tomb in the rock, the soldiers kept their watch. The second night is waning; the third day approaches; the yawning Romans begin to look wistfully to the orient for the first streak of morning: but the first light breaks not in the east today. Of a sudden, from above, an unlooked for splendor flashes down upon the watchers. Looking up, they see two angel forms, robed as it were in lightning, descending straight upon them. Down they come with flash and roar as of a bursting cloud; whereat the rock trembles, the tomb flies open, and the terrified "keepers" fall senseless in a swoon!

When they recover from this shock and again look around them, all is calm; but there, in long white garments, are the angels by the tomb's mouth, one of them sitting upon the stone that had closed it. The awe-struck soldiers retreat, leaving their trust to its new keepers.

By this time day is breaking over Jerusalem. The

devout women, who on Friday evening had prepared their spices, are early abroad to finish the embalming of the body of their Lord. By the way they discourse together concerning the great stone that shuts the tomb, and whom they will get to roll it away. To their surprise they find the tomb open. The first impression is that the Romans, or perhaps the hostile Jews, have removed the corpse. Under this impression Mary immediately starts back to the city, running, in her haste and agitation, to inform Peter and John that "they have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre."

[Mark 16 : 5—7 ; Matt. 28 : 5—7 ; Luke 24 : 4—8.]

The other women remain at the sepulchre awaiting the return of Mary with the disciples. In their perplexity they at length venture into the tomb (it being, as tombs in that country are generally, a room large enough to admit several persons). Here, to increase their fear, they perceive in the dim light two young men (apparently), "sitting" (one of them, at least) "on the right side, in shining garments." Rising up, one of the angels, for such they were, addresses them encouragingly, bidding them not fear, for, says he, "I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified ; he is not here, for he is risen as he said." Reminding them of Christ's prediction while yet in Galilee, that he would rise upon the third day from his death, and showing them the now vacant place

where he had lain (probably a niche cut into the rock on the side of the vault), he bids them go and tell the disciples "that he is risen," and that he will "go before them into Galilee."

Whether Christ had left the tomb while the soldiers were in their swoon, or after their retreat, is uncertain; but he is gone; the Lord is risen.

[Matt. 28 : 8—10; Mark 16 : 8; Luke 24 : 9—11.]

Trembling and agitated by mingled fear and joy, these women now leave the tomb, and "run to bring the disciples word." As they are going in haste and silence towards the city, Jesus himself meets them in the way, salutes them, saying, "Be not afraid," and bids them, as the angels had done, "Go tell my brethren (the disciples) that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

The apostles, however, with the exception of Peter and John, regarded their words "as idle tales, and they believed them not."

[John 20 : 3—10; Luke 24 : 12.]

Peter and John seem to have been in a part of the city less remote from the sepulchre than that where the other disciples were. Mary therefore sought them, and they, upon hearing that the tomb was open, started in haste to the place, followed by Mary. Taking a different road from that by which the other women returned, they did not meet them, nor

see Jesus. John, outrunning Peter, arrived first at the sepulchre. Looking in he discovers the grave-clothes lying there, but does not enter the tomb till Peter comes up. The latter goes directly into the sepulchre, and is followed by John.

They find "the linen clothes" laid in order, the napkin that had been about the head of Christ, "wrapped together in a place by itself."

This fact that the "clothes" containing the "hundred pounds of spices" were left, arranged in order, showed clearly that the grave had not been robbed, or the body removed by violence.

The prediction of Christ concerning the resurrection now occurs to them, and the conviction arises faintly that he has risen from the dead. Wondering "at that which was come to pass," they now depart.

[John 20 : 11—18 ; Mark 16 : 9—11.]

Mary, who had returned with or after them, remained "at the sepulchre weeping. "And as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain."

While she stands looking into the sepulchre, and telling the cause of her sorrow to the inquiring angel, Jesus himself comes to the tomb. Turning around and seeing a man behind her, having as yet received no intimation of the resurrection, and being in tears,

she notices the person indifferently, supposing it to be the gardener. To the inquiry why she weeps, and whom she seeks, she replies, "If thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him." Jesus now says to her in a significant tone, "Mary!" The well-known voice thrills through her, and she cries out in joy, "Rabboni." As she advances to embrace Jesus, under the impression that he has come back to sojourn again on earth as he did before his death, he refuses the embrace, to awaken in her higher views of his present manifestation, and bids her immediately go and tell his disciples that he is risen, but has not yet ascended to his Father. This implies that the "little time" that they were to be separated from him is not yet fulfilled, that he is not now to remain with them bodily. His address is significant, also, in the view it presents of their relation to God. "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." They are his "brethren," and through him brought into filial relationship to his Almighty Father. *

* It should be remarked that the order of Christ's appearance to Mary and the other women, is uncertain. Mark says he appeared *first* to Mary. The circumstances and facts narrated, seem, however, to imply that he appeared first of all to the other women. The solution given by Robinson seems satisfactory in favor of the order here adopted. "Mark narrates three, and only three, appearances of our Lord: of *these three*, that to Mary Magdalene takes place first." "First," in Mark, is therefore to be taken *relatively*.

[Matt. 28 : 11--15.]

While the above events were transpiring, some of the terrified "watch" had aroused the chief priests, and informed them of "the things that were done." A council is immediately convened, to deliberate and determine what shall be done. The result is, the soldiers are bribed to circulate a false report, the Sanhedrim engaging to stand between them and the governor, if investigation should be made by him. Pilate, being indifferent to the matter of appointing the watch, of course would be indifferent to the results; and as Jesus appeared after his resurrection, so far as we know, only to those who believed upon him, the Sanhedrim and unbelieving Jews gave a degree of currency to the report that the body was stolen while the soldiers slept.

[1 Cor. 15 : 5; Mark 16 : 12—13; Luke 24 : 13—35.]

Sometime during this "first day of the week," our Lord appeared unto Peter, but where, and under what circumstances, we are not informed. Peter's testimony had more influence on the yet unbelieving portion of the disciples than had that of the women.

On the afternoon of this same day, two disciples, probably not of the eleven apostles, went on foot to Emmaus, a town about seven miles from Jerusalem. They had heard of the absence of the body, and of the vision of angels, who said that Christ was risen, but had not heard that he had been seen by any

one. On the way, they converse earnestly concerning the great events of the last three days. As they pass along a third person joins them, and inquires the cause of their sadness, and the subject of their earnest discourse. Having no thought of seeing Christ, perhaps never having been intimately acquainted with him, or for some other reason, they do not recognize the stranger, but proceed to tell him of the frustration of their hopes in the death of Jesus, and the mysterious evacuation of the tomb.

The stranger then takes up the prophecies of the Old Testament referring to the death of Christ, showing them that these sufferings were necessary to the completion of Messiah's work.

Cheered, and deeply interested in his discourse, they prevail upon him to stop with them at Emmaus.

When they sat down to table with their guest, "he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them," in that peculiar manner which only one man had ever done before in their presence. This opens their eyes, they scrutinize the stranger, and, to their surprise and joy, recognize their Lord.

Jesus immediately after departs, and they return to the city to announce the news to the other disciples.

They find the eleven assembled, with other believers, already rejoicing, though with lingering doubt and astonishment, in the report of Peter and the women that had seen him.

[Mark 16 : 14; 1 Cor. 15 : 5; Luke 24 : 36—49; John 20 : 19—23.]

The same evening ten of the apostles, Thomas being absent, were together taking their evening meal, with doors closed "for fear of the Jews." To their surprise and terror ("supposing that they had seen a spirit") Jesus suddenly enters the room, saying, "Peace be unto you." He reproves them for their scepticism concerning his resurrection, shows them the wounds in his hands and feet in confirmation of his actual corporeal presence, and, as if to remove the possibility of doubt, asks for food, and eats before them. He then refers them back to his former predictions of death and resurrection, shows the necessity of these things for the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy, and in order "that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name among all nations."

He then declares that they are to be "witnesses of these things;" and that after they "shall be endued with power from on high," they are to go forth as he had done, preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins. He closes his address by breathing upon them, saying, at the same time, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" thus symbolizing and introducing that inspiration which they were to receive and exercise as his ambassadors.

We have no other recorded instance of Christ's appearance until the evening of the next Sunday.

Probably many interviews between Christ and single disciples have been omitted by the sacred writers, only the more remarkable being recorded.

[John 20 : 24—29.]

Thomas, ever obtuse and faithless, was informed by the other disciples of the re-appearance of Christ; but so inconceivable did the thing appear to him, that he declared that he could not believe unless he should put his fingers into the very nail-prints on the Saviour's hands, and into the wound in his side.

Upon the next Sunday evening the eleven were together in the same manner, and Jesus again appeared among them. Aware of the unbelief of Thomas, he addressed him at once with the startling language, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and *thrust it into my side!*"

So powerful is the impression made upon Thomas by this address, and the appearance of Christ, that he cries out, as no disciple had done before, "My Lord and my God!" The impression of his divinity overwhelmed and subdued him.

The Lord then said in a kind but significant manner, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The most commendable faith is not based upon palpable, sensuous manifestations of Christ. Few would ever attain a saving faith, if they demanded

such evidence as did Thomas. His long intimacy with Christ, and knowledge of his power, should have prepared him to receive readily the testimony of his brethren respecting his Lord's re-appearance.

It is note-worthy that Jesus approves the address that names him "God."

[Matt. 28 : 16 ; John 21 : 1—24.]

The first message sent by Christ to his disciples, after the resurrection, was, that they should repair to Galilee, the theatre of most of their former intercourse. It was not to be expected that Christ would remain long at Jerusalem, his object being not now to make converts, so much as to strengthen the faith of those who already believed. The greater part of the true disciples lived in Galilee, and it was Christ's design to have at least one personal interview with all, or most of them, before his ascension to his Father.

Accordingly, the next week after the close of the feast of Passover, the apostles returned to their homes, and resumed their customary avocations.

The next meeting recorded in our history, was at the sea of Tiberias, or lake of Gennesaret, the scene of so many interesting incidents in the Saviour's life. Seven of the apostles had spent a fruitless night upon the lake with their fishing boats and nets. In the morning, when about "two hundred cubits" out, some one on shore calls to them familiarly, "Children, have ye

any meat?" They answer, "No," and he tells them to cast their "net on the right side of the vessel," and they shall be successful. Obeying the direction, the net is immediately filled.

This surprising success, so like what once before occurred under the Saviour's direction, struck the disciples, and the susceptible John now recognized the voice, and exclaimed, "It is the Lord." Peter, in his joy and haste, leaped overboard and swam ashore, leaving the others to drag the net with its "hundred and fifty-three great fishes."

A meal is prepared and eaten, after which Jesus questions Peter respecting the strength of his attachment to himself. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" more than the other disciples love me? Peter answers affirmatively, and is directed to prove his love by deeds of devotion to Christ's flock. Upon the third repetition of the question in the same form, Peter discovers that allusion is made to his strong declarations of fidelity made on the night of the Passover, and to his weak and sinful denial of his Master so soon afterward. Humbled and mortified, but still conscious of true devotion to his Master, he appeals to him as one who knows the heart: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus again bids him feed his sheep; and somewhat enigmatically intimates that Peter shall hereafter have occasion to suffer for his sake.

Peter then makes an inquiry respecting the fate of John. Regarding the question as profitless, if not improper, Christ answers him accordingly: "What is that to thee?"

[Matt. 28 : 16—20; 1 Cor. 15 : 6.]

By Christ's direction notice had been circulated throughout Galilee, for a general convocation of all believers. A certain mountain was fixed upon by the Saviour as the place where he would hold his last general interview with his friends. In accordance with his purpose of revealing himself only to belivers a solitary place was selected; and probably notice of the meeting was given only to those for whom it was intended.

Here more than five hundred assembled to receive the farewell charge of their divine Lord. The substance of his charge to them is given in the concluding words. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." The whole church of believers are thus commissioned to preach the gospel. The whole world is to receive it; and Christ, in the plenitude of his power, will accompany his ambassadors until the great work shall be achieved.

[1 Cor. 15 : 7; Acts 1 : 3—12; Luke 24 : 50—53; Mark 16 : 15—22; John 20 : 30, 31, and 21 : 25.]

Soon after the above interview with the Galileans, Jesus and the eleven returned again to Jerusalem. Here it is mentioned that he was "seen of James" on one occasion, but the particular time and place are not specified.

Thus forty days passed from the time of the resurrection. The faith of the disciples was strengthened and enlightened. They had received higher views of the plan of Messiah's kingdom. With the endowment of the promised spirit, they would be prepared to go forth as ambassadors for Christ, and successfully promulgate his gospel.

And now the time came when the divine Emmanuel would ascend to his Father. His sojourn upon our unworthy earth was about to terminate. Henceforth his manifestation must be spiritual, and invisible to the carnal sense.

Preparatory to his departure he meets the eleven and holds one more friendly interview. He bids them remain at Jerusalem until they should receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which he tells them will take place "not many days hence."

Still the veil was upon their hearts respecting the entire spirituality of his kingdom. They could not yet abandon the carnal notion that the outer theocracy was to be restored and perfected by him. To their inquiry whether Christ will now "restore the

kingdom to Israel," he replies that it is not for them "to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power." They need not be concerned about the plans of Providence. Enough that they attend to their own appointed duties. Their commission, he again tells them, is, to be his witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." They shall have the presence of his spirit to aid them, and be endowed with the power of working miracles, in confirmation of their divine appointment. With such divine guidance and support, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned."

So saying, Christ leads his disciples across the Mount of Olives, down the eastern slope, near to Bethany. Here he pauses, lifts up his hands, and blesses them, and, as he closes his benediction, rises before them heavenward, borne upward by an unseen power, until a cloud receives him out of their sight.

Thus, with a benediction and in a miracle, ends the earthly sojourn of the Son of God.

"*And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*"

# SYNOPTICAL HARMONY AND INDEX.

## PERIOD FIRST.

| MATTHEW. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 : 18 to 25 | | 1 : 26 to 56 | 1 : 14 | 183 |
| | | 2 : 1 to 20 | | 185 |
| | | 2 : 21 to 38 | | 188 |
| 2 : 1 to 12 | | | | 190 |
| 2 : 13 to 18 | | | | 193 |
| 2 : 18 to 23 | | 2 : 39, 40 | | 195 |
| | | 2 : 41 to 52 | | 197 |

## PERIOD SECOND.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 : 1 to 12 | 1 : 1 to 8 | 3 : 1 to 18 | | 206 |
| 3 : 13 : 17 | 1 : 9 to 11 | 3 : 21 to 23 | | 212 |
| | | | 1 19 to 28 | 214 |
| 4 : 1 to 11 | 1 : 12, 13 | 4 : 1 to 13 | | 215 |
| | | | 1 : 29 to 42 | 222 |
| | | | 1 : 43 to 51 | 224 |
| | | | 2 : 1 to 12 | 226 |

## PERIOD THIRD.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 2 : 13 to 25 | 232 |
| | | | 3 : 1 to 21 | 233 |
| | | | 3 : 22 to 36 | 236 |
| 4 : 12 ; 14 : 3 to 5 | 1 : 14 ; 6 : 17 to 20 | 4 : 14 ; 3 : 19, 20 | 4 : 1 to 42 | 238 |

| MATTHEW. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 : 17 | 1 : 14 to 15 | 4 : 14, 15 | 4 : 43 to 45 | 242 |
| | | | 4 : 46 to 54 | 243 |
| 4 : 13 to 16 | | 4 : 16 to 31 | | 244 |
| 4 : 18 to 22 | 1 : 16 to 20 | 5 : 1 to 11 | | 246 |
| | 1 : 21 to 28 | 4 : 31 to 37 | | 248 |
| 8 : 14 to 17 | 1 : 29 to 34 | 4 : 38 to 41 | | 249 |
| | 1 : 35 to 39 | 4 : 42 to 44 | | 251 |
| 4 : 23 to 25 | | | | 252 |
| 8 : 2 to 4 | 1 : 40 to 45 | 5 : 12 to 16 | | 252 |
| 9 : 2 to 8 | 2 : 1 to 12 | 5 : 17 to 26 | | 254 |
| 9 : 9 | 2 : 13, 14 | 5 : 27, 28 | | 255 |

---

## PERIOD FOURTH.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 5 : 1 to 47 | 257 |
| 12 : 1 to 8 | 2 : 23 to 28 | 6 : 1 to 5 | | 260 |
| 12 : 9 to 14 | 3 : 1 to 6 | 6 : 6 to 11 | | 261 |
| 12 : 15 to 21 | 3 : 7 to 12 | | | 262 |
| 10 : 2 to 4 | 3 : 13 to 19 | 6 : 12 to 19 | | 264 |
| 5 : 1 to 48; 6 : 1 to 8; 6 : 15 to 34; 7 : 1 to 29; 8 : 1 | | 6 : 20 to 49 | | 267 |
| 8 : 5 to 13 | | 7 : 1 to 10 | | 271 |
| | | 7 : 11 to 17 | | 272 |
| 11 : 2 to 19 | | 7 : 18 to 35 | | 273 |
| | | 7 : 36 to 50 | | 278 |
| | | 8 : 1 to 3 | | 280 |
| 12 : 23 to 37 | 3 : 22 to 30 | 11 : 14 to 23 | | 281 |
| 12 : 38 to 45 | 11 : 16; 24 to 36 | | | 283 |
| 12 : 46 to 50 | 3 : 31 to 35 | 8 : 19 to 21 | | 285 |
| | | 11 : 37 to 54 | | 286 |
| | | 12 : 1 to 59 | | 289 |
| | | 13 : 1 to 9 | | 294 |
| 3 : 1 to 23 | 4 : 1 to 25 | 8 : 4 to 18 | | 295 |
| 13 : 24 to 53 | 4 : 26 to 34 | | | 297 |
| 8 : 18 to 27 | 4 : 35 to 41 | 8 : 22 to 25; 9 : 57 to 62 | | 299 |
| 8 : 28 to 34; 9 : 1 | 5 : 1 to 21 | 8 : 26 to 40 | | 302 |
| 9 : 10 to 17 | 2 : 15 to 22 | 5 : 29 to 39 | | 304 |
| 9 : 18 to 26 | 5 : 22 to 43 | 8 : 41 to 56 | | 307 |

| MATTHEW. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 : 27 to 34 | | | | 309 |
| 13 : 54 to 58 | 6 : 1 to 6 | | | 310 |
| 7 : 6; 9 : 35 to 38 ; 10 : 1 to 15 ; 11 : 1 | 6 : 6 to 13 | 9 : 1 to 6 | | 311 |
| 14 : 6 to 11 | 6 : 21 to 29 | | | 313 |
| 14 : 1 to 2 | 6 : 14 to 16 | 9 : 7 to 9 | | 314 |
| 14 : 12 to 21 | 6 : 30 to 44 | 9 : 10 to 17 | 6 : 1 to 14 | 315 |
| | | | 6 : 22 to 71 ; 7 : 1 | 321 |
| 15 : 1 to 20 | 7 : 1 to 23 | | | 325 |

---

## PERIOD FIFTH.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 : 21 to 28 | 7 : 24 to 30 | | | 328 |
| 15 : 29 to 38 | 7 : 31 to 37 ; 8 : 1 to 9 | | | 329 |
| 15 : 39 ; 16 : 1 to 4 | 8 : 10 to 12 | | | 331 |
| 16 : 4 to 12 | 8 : 13 to 21 | | | 331 |
| | 8 : 22 to 26 | | | 332 |
| 16 : 13 to 20 | 8 : 27 to 30 | 9 : 18 to 21 | | 333 |
| 16 : 21 to 28 | 8 : 31 to 38 ; 9 : 1 | 9 : 22 to 27 | | 334 |
| 17 : 1 to 13 | 9 : 2 to 13 | 9 : 28 to 36 | | 335 |
| 17 : 14 to 21 | 9 : 14 to 29 | 9 : 37 to 43 | | 338 |
| 17 ; 22, 23 | 9 : 30 to 32 | 9 : 43 to 45 | | 339 |
| 17 : 24 to 27 | 9 : 33 | | | 340 |
| 18 : 1 to 9 | 9 : 33 to 48 | 9 : 46 to 50 | | 341 |
| 18 : 15 to 17 | | | | 343 |
| 18 : 21 to 35 | | | | 344 |
| 10 : 16 to 42 ; 11 : 20 to 24 | | 10 : 1 to 16 | | 344 |
| | | 9 : 51 to 56 ; 18 : 11 to 19 | 7 : 2 to 10 | 348 |

## PERIOD SIXTH.

| MATTHEW. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 7 : 11 to 53 ; 8 : 1 | 351 |
| | | | 8 : 2 to 11 | 355 |
| | | | 8 : 12 to 59 | 356 |
| | | 10 : 25 to 37 | | 360 |
| | | 10 : 38 to 42 | | 361 |
| 6 : 7 to 15 ; 18 : 19 to 20 | | 11 : 1 to 13 | | 362 |
| | | 10 : 17 to 24 | | 365 |
| | | | 9 : 1 to 14 ; 10 : 1 to 21 | 366 |
| | | | 10 : 22 to 42 | 370 |
| | | | 11 : 1 to 46 | 372 |
| | | | 11 : 47 to 54 | 376 |
| 19 : 1, 2 | 10 : 1 | 13 : 10 to 21 | | 378 |
| | | 13 : 22 to 33 | | 379 |
| | | 14 : 1 to 24 | | 380 |
| | | 14 : 25 to 35 | | 382 |
| | | 15 : 1 to 32 | | 383 |
| | | 16 : 1 to 13 | | 383 |
| | | 16 : 14, 15, 19 to 31 | | 384 |
| | | 18 : 9 to 14 ; 18 : 1 to 8 | | 385 |
| 19 : 3 to 12 | 10 : 2 to 12 | | | 386 |
| 19 : 13 to 15 | 10 : 13 to 16 | 18 : 15 to 17 | | 387 |
| 19 : 16 to 30 ; 20 : 1 to 16 | 10 : 17 to 31 | 18 : 18 to 30 | | 388 |
| 20 : 17 to 19 | 10 : 32 to 34 | 18 : 31 to 34 | | 390 |
| 20 : 20 to 28 | 10 : 35 to 45 | | | 391 |
| 20 : 29 to 34 | 10 : 46 to 52 | 18 : 35 to 43 ; 19 : 1 | | 392 |
| | | 19 : 2 to 27 | | 393 |
| | | 19 : 28 | 11 : 55 to 57 ; 12 : 1, 9 to 11 | 395 |

## PERIOD SEVENTH.

| MATTHEW. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 21 : 1 to 11; 14 to 17 | 11 : 1 to 11 | 19 : 29 to 44 | 12 : 12 to 19 | 398 |
| 21 : 12, 13, 18, 19 | 11 : 12 to 19 | 19 : 45 to 48 | | 401 |
| | | 21 : 37 to 38 | | 403 |
| 21 : 20 to 22 | 11 : 20 to 26 | 17 : 5, 6 | | 403 |
| 21 : 23 to 32 | 11 : 27 to 33 | 20 : 1 to 8 | | 404 |
| 21 : 33 to 46 | 12 : 1 to 12 | 20 : 9 to 19 | | 405 |
| 22 : 1 to 14 | | | | 406 |
| 22 : 15 to 22 | 12 : 13 to 17 | 20 : 20 to 26 | | 407 |
| 22 : 23 to 33 | 12 : 18 to 27 | 20 : 27 to 40 | | 409 |
| 22 : 34 to 40 | 12 : 28 to 34 | | | 410 |
| 22 : 41 to 46 | 12 : 35 to 37 | 20 : 41 to 44 | | 410 |
| 23 : 1 to 12 | 12 : 38, 39 | 20 : 45, 46 | | 411 |
| 23 : 13 to 39 | 12 : 40 | 20, 47 | | 411 |
| | 12 : 41 to 44 | 21 : 1 to 4 | | 413 |
| 24 : 1, 2 | 13 : 1, 2 | 21 : 5, 6 | | 413 |
| | | | 12 : 37 to 42 | 414 |
| | | | 12 : 20 to 22, 44 to 50, 23 to 36 | 414 |
| 24 : 3 to 14 | 13 : 3 to 13 | 21 : 5 to 19 | | 417 |
| 24 : 15 to 42 | 13 : 14 to 37 | 21 : 20 to 36 | | 418 |
| 24 : 43 to 51; 25 : 1 to 30 | | | | 420 |
| 25 : 31 to 46 | | | | 422 |
| 26 : 1 to 16 | 14 : 1 to 11 | 22 : 1 to 6 | | 423 |
| 26 : 17 to 19 | 14 : 12 to 16 | 22 : 7 to 13 | | 425 |
| 26 : 20 | 14 : 17 | 22 : 14 to 18; 24 to 30 | 13 : 1 to 20 | 427 |
| 26 : 21 to 25 | 14 : 18 to 21 | 22 : 21 to 23 | 13 : 21 to 35 | 429 |
| 26 : 31 to 35 | 14 : 27 to 31 | 22 : 31 to 38 | 13 : 36 to 38 | 431 |
| 26 : 26 to 29 | 14 : 22 to 25 | 22 : 19 to 20 | 1 Cor. 11 : 23 to 25 | 432 |
| | | | 14 : 1 to 31 | 433 |
| | | | 15 : 1 to 27 | 434 |
| | | | 16 : 1 to 33 | 435 |
| | | | 17 : 1 to 26 | 437 |
| 26 : 30, 36 to 46 | 14 : 26, 32 to 42 | 22 : 39 to 46 | 18 : 1 | 438 |
| | | | 18 : 2, 3 | 440 |

| MATTHEW. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. | Page |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 26 : 47 to 56 | 14 : 43 to 52 | 22 : 47 to 53 | 18 : 4 to 12 | 441 |
| 26 : 57, 58 69 to 75 | 14 : 53, 54, 66, to 72 | 22 : 54 to 62 | 18 : 13 to 27 | 443 |
| 26 : 59 to 68 | 14 : 55 to 65 | 22 : 63 to 71 | | 445 |
| 27 : 1, 2, 11 to 14 | 15 : 1 to 5 | 23 : 1 to 5 | 18 : 28 to 38 | 446 |
| | | 23 : 6 to 12 | | 449 |
| 27 : 15 to 26 | 15 : 6 to 15 | 33 : 13 to 25 | 18 : 39, 40 | 450 |
| 27 : 26 to 30 | 15 : 15 to 19 | | 19 : 1 to 16 | 451 |
| 27 : 3 to 10 | | (Acts 1 : 18,19) | | 452 |
| 27 : 31 to 34 | 15 : 20 to 23 | 28 : 26 to 33 | 19 : 16, 17 | 454 |
| 27 : 35 to 38 | 15 : 24 to 28 | 23 : 33, 34, 38 | 19 : 18 to 24 | 455 |
| 27 : 39 to 44 | 15 : 29 to 32 | 23 : 35 to 37, 39 to 43 | | 456 |
| | | | 19 : 25 to 27 | 457 |
| 27 : 45 to 50 | 15 : 33 to 37 | 23 : 44 to 46 | 19 : 28 to 30 | 457 |
| 27 : 51 to 56 | 15 : 38 to 41 | 23 : 45, 47 to 49 | | 458 |
| 27 : 57 to 66 | 15 : 42 to 47 | 23 : 50 to 56 | 19 : 38 to 42 | 459 |

## PERIOD EIGHTH.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 28 : 1 to 4 | 16 : 1 to 4 | 24 : 1 to 3 | 20 : 1, 2 | 464 |
| 28 : 5 to 7 | 16 : 5 to 7 | 24 : 4 to 8 | | 465 |
| 28 : 8 to 10 | 16 : 8 | 24 : 9 to 11 | | 466 |
| | | 24 : 12 | 20 : 3 to 10 | 466 |
| | 16 : 9 to 11 | | 20 : 11 to 18 | 467 |
| 28 : 11 to 15 | | | | 469 |
| (1 Cor. 15 : 5) | 16 : 14 | 24 : 36 to 49 | 20 : 19 to 23 | 471 |
| | | | 20 : 24 to 29 | 472 |
| 28 : 16 | | | 21 : 1 to 24 | 473 |
| 28 : 16 to 20 | | (1 Cor. 15 : 6) | | 475 |
| (1 Cor. 15 : 7; Acts 1 : 3 to 12) | 16 : 15 to 22 | 24 : 50 to 53 | 20 : 30, 31; 21 : 25 | 476 |

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